

Journal of Mormon History

Volume 11 | Issue 1

Article 1

1984

Journal of Mormon History Vol. 11, 1984

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Recommended Citation

(1984) "Journal of Mormon History Vol. 11, 1984," *Journal of Mormon History*. Vol. 11 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.
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The *Journal of Mormon History* is published annually
by the Mormon History Association, P.O. Box 7010, University
Station, Provo, Utah 84602, and distributed to members
upon payment of the annual dues:
Student, \$5.00; Regular, \$7.50;
Sustaining, \$20.00; Friend of Mormon History, \$100.00;
Mormon History Association Patron, \$500.00 or more.
Single copies, \$5.00

Articles for publication should be addressed to
Dean L. May, Department of History, University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

All manuscripts are deposited in the MHA archives after
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ISSN 0094-7342

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FRONT COVER: The "Exile Wives" in Mexico. Photograph courtesy Latter-Day Saint Historical Department. BACK COVER: Alvin Heaton and Fifteen Sons, Moccasin Springs, Arizona, June 1, 1907. Photograph courtesy of Latter-day Saint Historical Department.

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MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION AWARDS FOR 1983

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FRANCIS M. CHIPMAN AWARD TO OUTSTANDING YOUNG SCHOLAR :

Kenneth L. Cannon II for publication of " 'Mountain Common Law': The Extralegal Punishment of Seducers in Early Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 51 (Fall 1983): 308-27 and "After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890-1906," *Sunstone* 8 (Jan.-April 1983): 27-35.

SPECIAL CITATION :

To Obert C. Tanner "for continuing support for the Tanner Lecture Series at the annual meetings of the Mormon History Association."

To Lavina Fielding Anderson "for capable, innovative editing of the Mormon History Association Newsletter."

To Richard Howard "for distinguished research, outstanding writing and for courageously teaching Mormon history in summer camps, reunions, and other settings to professional historians and laity alike."

SPECIAL AWARD FOR DOCUMENTARY PUBLISHING :

To Scott Kenney "for publication of the Wilford Woodruff Journals."

OTHER AWARDS :

The Grace Fort Arrington Award for Historical Excellence to Peggy Fletcher and the Sunstone Foundation.

The William Grover and Winnifred Foster Reese History Award to Valeen Tippetts Avery for her dissertation on David Hyrum Smith (Ph.D., Northern Arizona University).

A Time of Marriage: Monogamy and Polygamy in a Utah Town

By Larry Logue

Mormon theology has always put an extraordinary value on marriage. Church doctrine holds that a host of spirits waits in heaven to be given bodies by parents on earth, in order to begin the mortal phase of their existence. There is thus a special obligation for Mormons to marry and embody as many spirits as possible. Indeed, "no people hold more sacred the principle of marriage," wrote a church official at the turn of the century.¹ The early Mormon theologian Parley P. Pratt declared that "to marry and multiply is a positive command of Almighty God, binding on all persons of both sexes." To neglect this duty was "to fail to answer the end of our creation, and is a very great sin."² Brigham Young was especially insistent on the need for marriage, saying that there should be assigned to "each of the young men in Israel, who have arrived at an age to marry, a mission to go straightway and get married to a good sister."³

Larry Logue recently completed his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania and is currently a research associate at the University of Southern California. This essay was written while Dr. Logue was a Weatherhead Resident Scholar at the School of American Research. The author would like to thank the Weatherhead Foundation and the School for their generous support, as well as Melvyn Hammarberg and Michael Zuckerman for their helpful comments on an earlier version of the article.

¹ M. F. Cowley, *Cowley's Talks on Doctrine* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: Ben E. Rich, 1902), p. 179.

² Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855), p. 165.

³ John A. Widtsoe, comp., *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1925), p. 303.

This essay is a study of marriage patterns in early St. George, the principal town of "Utah's Dixie." St. George was founded in 1861 at Brigham Young's direction and was given the assignment of producing cotton and other warm-weather crops for Utah. Young had overestimated the area's farming potential: Dixie was plagued with poor soil, scarce rainfall, and unruly rivers. However, Young was unwilling to give up this southwestern outpost, and he authorized public-work projects, including Utah's first Mormon temple, to keep the struggling colony viable. Continual church support, through shipments of supplies from elsewhere in Utah, through the leadership's recruitment of new settlers, and through Young's winter sojourns in St. George, allowed the town to grow steadily, although food shortages recurred well after the first years of extreme hardship. From 748 people at its founding, St. George grew to 1,142 in 1870 and 1,332 in 1880.

The data for this essay have been compiled from family group sheets and other records of the families who lived in St. George in its first two decades. A first-settlers list and the 1870 and 1880 federal censuses identified the town's families in this period. The Mormon genealogical archives and a volume of genealogies for St. George's settlers⁴ were searched for these families' records and nearly 90 percent of the families were found, resulting in a data set which includes the vital events of 2,389 individuals. This essay will focus on the adults in the data set — those who came to St. George as parents, plus those who came of age before 1880.

The importance of marriage was frequently affirmed in St. George. Sermons explained that "what God required [was] the regeneration of the Human family," and described marriages as "the channels which God had appointed for the bringing forth of the children of Men," allowing "the Spirits in the Celestial world to come on earth and tabernacle in the flesh, thereby to gain an experience which they could only gain by being clad in mortality."⁵ A church leader "exhorted the young men and women to get married and fulfill the measure of their creation for there were ten thousands of choice Spirits every year waiting to tabernacle in the flesh."⁶ A St. George resident, about to leave for a church conference in Salt Lake City, was told by Erastus Snow, the town's ecclesiastical leader, to "bring back a wife." And he did.⁷

In addition to this general advocacy of marriage, the church also urged members in good standing to marry more than one wife for time and eternity. Joseph Smith had explained this duty:

We shall not marry . . . [in heaven] hence it is necessary for us to marry here, and to marry as much as we can, for then in heaven a man will take the wives whom he

⁴ The genealogies are in Arthur K. Hafen, *Devoted Empire Builders (Pioneers of St. George)* (St. George: Privately published, 1969).

⁵ A. Karl Larson and Katharine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1980), April 27, December 4, 1884 (hereafter cited as *Walker Diary*).

⁶ *Ibid.*, August 14, 1881.

⁷ Autobiography of Joseph Orton, typescript, Washington County Library, St. George, p. 15.

married on earth . . . they will be his queens, and their children will be his subjects . . . hence we shall ourselves be gods!⁸

Subsequent leaders reinforced this belief, declaring that the purpose of plural marriage was for Mormon men to "have wives and posterity in the world to come and throughout the endless ages of eternity," and repeating Smith's promise that plural wives would become "queens in heaven, and rulers to all eternity."⁹ Leading Mormons who did not take plural wives were viewed with suspicion. One prominent Mormon, referring to another who refused to marry a second wife, admitted that "we look on [him] as only half a Mormon."¹⁰

Plural marriage (also widely known in the nineteenth century as polygamy) was likewise promoted in St. George. Erastus Snow insisted in a sermon

that in taking [plural] wives we were only doing as God commanded us, and all that entered into [plural marriage] and carried out the divine behest of the great Eternal would progress and would always be in advance forever and ever of those who had refused and neglected to obey this glorious principle.¹¹

Other sermons reminded men that monogamists were unlikely to attain important offices in this life or glory in the afterlife.¹² Mothers were urged "to teach their daughters and encourage them in [plural marriage]."¹³ One resident was instructed by Brigham Young to take a second wife, even though he and his first wife were opposed; they eventually obeyed.¹⁴ A St. George woman had resolved not to protest polygamy because "I knew by the Spirit of God that it was true."¹⁵ Another woman was convinced that plural marriage "was the only source through which I could attain salvation."¹⁶ Marriage was clearly a sacred obligation for Mormons, and plural marriage was an equally sacred act for spiritually or socially aspiring Latter-day Saints.

This essay will show how the people of early St. George ordered their marriage-making, in light of their spiritual obligations and social circumstances. Since plural marriage was the truly distinctive feature of Mormon nuptiality, its measurable features compared with monogamy will be the initial focus of this essay; however, other aspects of family life in St. George that are illuminated by marriage data, such as the degree of parental control within

⁸ Quoted in Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1979), p. 163.

⁹ Wilford Woodruff, quoted in Stanley P. Hirshson, *The Lion of the Lord: A Biography of Brigham Young* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 121.

¹⁰ John Taylor, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 122.

¹¹ Walker Diary, November 7, 1882. See also *ibid.*, December 3, 1880; January 1 and February 13, 1881; November 3, 1883.

¹² *Ibid.*, April 26, 1884, March 16, 1881.

¹³ James G. Bleak, "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission," typescript, 2:177, Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah.

¹⁴ L. W. Macfarlane, *Yours Sincerely, John M. Macfarlane* (Salt Lake City: L. W. Macfarlane, 1980), pp. 79-81.

¹⁵ Autobiography of Ann Prior Jarvis, typescript, Brigham Young University Library, p. 22.

¹⁶ Biographical Record of Martha Cragun Cox, typescript, Washington County Library, p. 27.

families and economic opportunities for new households, will be a major concern as well.

MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGES

There are 181 men and 199 women in the St. George sample who were involved in monogamous first marriages.¹⁷ Monogamous marriages are those in which the husband never took a plural wife. These men may of course have married more than once if the first wife died, but they never had more than one wife at a time. Table 1 shows measures of age at first marriage for monogamous St. George residents compared with two cohorts of once-married couples from the Mormon Demographic History (MDH) project; the latter project is a study of the demographic history of Utah and the "Mormon Trail." St. George residents are divided into those married before and those married after 1860, and the closest MDH cohorts are shown for comparison. The table shows close agreement between St. George and the larger sample. Men were

TABLE 1

AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE IN MONOGAMOUS MARRIAGES, ST. GEORGE AND
"MORMON DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY" (MDH) SAMPLES

	ST. GEORGE		MDH SAMPLE	
	Married before 1860	Married 1860-80	Married 1846-58	Married 1870-80
MEN				
Mean	25.1	23.8	25.1	24.4
Std. Dev.	5.2	4.1	5.7	4.9
Median	24.0	22.8	-----	-----
N	82	99	732	2013
Significance of difference	p>.05		p<.05	
WOMEN				
Mean	20.4	19.8	21.2	20.0
Std. Dev.	3.9	3.5	4.3	3.5
Median	20.0	19.1	20.4	19.4
N	88	111	732	2013
Significance of difference	p>.05		p<.05	

SOURCE: Calculated from M. Skolnick et al., "Mormon Demographic History I: Nuptiality and Fertility of Once-Married Couples," *Population Studies* 32 (March 1978): 14. All St. George data in Tables 1-11, Figure 1 are from Logue, "Belief and Behavior."

¹⁷ An additional four cases, or 2 percent of the total, have an unknown age at marriage which cannot be estimated. See also Larry Logue, "Belief and Behavior in a Mormon Town: Nineteenth-Century St. George, Utah" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1984), Appendix A.

twenty-five and women about twenty in couples marrying before 1860. In the next generation, both sexes married about a year younger in each sample.¹⁸

Table 2 shows age-at-marriage data from several Eastern states roughly contemporary with the two St. George groups. Both men and women married earlier in St. George than their contemporaries in these five states. The difference is more pronounced for women than men: St. George women married over two years earlier than those in the East, whereas St. George men were about a year younger. These comparisons, taken together with the MDH averages shown in table 1, indicate that St. George monogamous couples differed little from their counterparts throughout the Mormon region in marrying earlier than men or women in the East.

THE INCIDENCE OF POLYGAMY

Determining the extent of plural marriage is a twofold problem. The numerator in a plural-marriage rate, consisting of polygamous individuals, is conceptually straightforward, although the discussion below will point out practical problems in identifying polygamists. The denominator, on the other hand, is conceptually as well as practically difficult. Identifying Mormon men who

TABLE 2

AGE AT MONOGAMOUS FIRST MARRIAGE IN ST. GEORGE COMPARED WITH OTHER AMERICAN POPULATIONS

	MEAN AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE	
	Men	Women
St. George		
All monogamists	24.4	20.0
Kentucky, 1859	25.0	21.5
Massachusetts		
1860	26.2	23.6
1875	26.4	23.9
Rhode Island, 1860	23.3
Vermont		
1859	25.8	23.0
1870	25.5	23.0
New Jersey, 1868	24.8	22.4

SOURCE: Thomas P. Monahan, *The Pattern of Age at Marriage in the United States* (Philadelphia: Stephenson-Brothers, 1951), pp. 157, 161, 174, 176, 207.

¹⁸ The statistical significance of the decline in age between the two MDH cohorts is partly a function of the large number of cases in the sample.

were "at risk" of becoming polygamists is no easy matter, because the church did not intend plural marriage to be universal. In principle, plural marriage was carefully regulated by the church hierarchy. Church policy required a man who wanted to take a plural wife to consult the church's president, who was to await a divine revelation approving the marriage. Although in practice approval could be granted by lesser authorities,¹⁹ the desire for exclusivity is clear. Brigham Young underscored this desire when he specified who should seek church approval:

[Plural marriage] was never given of the Lord for any but his faithful children; it is not for the ungodly at all; no man has a right to a wife, or wives, unless he honors his priesthood and magnifies his calling before God.²⁰

One evidence of good standing in the priesthood was to have entered celestial marriage. Although it was closely allied with plural marriage, this ordinance could be performed for first marriages as well. Celestial marriage was, however, restricted "to those members of the Church only who are adjudged worthy of participation in the special blessings of the House of the Lord."²¹ It was thus governed by rules of fitness similar to those for plural marriage. Indeed, in many cases the sealing of a member's first marriage would demonstrate his probable worthiness for a subsequent plural marriage.

In practice this system did not work entirely as intended. The only place in Utah where marriages could be sealed before the St. George Temple was completed in 1877 was the makeshift Endowment House in Salt Lake City. Travel was clearly a problem in having any temple ordinance performed for remote residents. There is nonetheless a pattern visible in the marriage data from St. George. Only two of the seventy-six polygamists with church data²² did not have any of their marriages eventually sealed. Some of the marriages that were sealed showed slippage in the system of approval: eight first marriages were sealed *after* the second marriage, and five more men had the second marriage sealed but not the first. The point is, however, that all but two of the polygamous husbands proved at some time that they were worthy of one of the church's principal blessings. In contrast, fourteen percent of monogamous marriages with church data were not sealed during the couple's lifetime. For one reason or another, these couples never obtained the priesthood's eternal sanction for their marriage. Although there were imperfections in the approval process, it is reasonable to expect that most, if not all, of the husbands in these

¹⁹ The official policy is quoted in William Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons, from the Date of Their Origin to the Year 1901* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), p. 587. Approval in practice is described in Nels Anderson, *Desert Saints; the Mormon Frontier in Utah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 401 and Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1954), p. 141.

²⁰ Quoted in Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1971), p. 40.

²¹ James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1968), pp. 445-46.

²² Tabulations of church ordinance data for individuals in this essay will exclude families reconstructed without a family group sheet. Such families are about one-fourth of total families in the St. George sample; see Logue, "Belief and Behavior," Appendix A.

marriages could not have gotten permission to take a second wife and were thus ineligible for plural marriage. The denominator, or the at-risk population for plural marriage in St. George, will therefore be figured in two ways in this essay. One way will use the full population, to measure polygamy's impact on the whole community; the other will reduce the denominator by 14 percent to estimate the prevalence of polygamy among the population that truly qualified for plural marriage.

The actual measurement of a plural marriage rate causes practical as well as conceptual problems. Although the numerator is conceptually simple, counting those involved in polygamy can be difficult. Studies that have used censuses place the ratio of polygamists to all husbands at under 10 percent,²³ but census schedules do not actually indicate polygamous marriages. Polygamy must, in the absence of other sources, be inferred from the listing of multiple wives in a household. However, polygamists often maintained multiple households, some of which were in different towns. When a census is the sole source, name repetition in Mormon towns makes linking of plural households difficult at best and nearly impossible where multiple towns were involved. Polygamists who at the time of enumeration had only one wife, due to the death of a plural wife, would likewise be overlooked, as would those who were absent traveling with one or more wives, leaving one apparently monogamous wife in town.

The St. George data set, on the other hand, was constructed from family group sheets and published genealogies, in addition to censuses,²⁴ and the linkage of plural households is simple and reliable. To calculate a rate comparable to the census polygamy rates compiled in other studies, the households in the 1870 and 1880 St. George censuses can be classified as monogamous or polygamous from the information in the data set of reconstructed families. Each household is classified by the status of the husband at the time of the census; husbands who maintained several households are counted once. The top half of table 3 shows plural-marriage rates for St. George households. Instead of the 9 percent incidence found in one study of southern Utah censuses,²⁵ nearly 30 percent of St. George households were involved in polygamy in 1870 and 33 percent in 1880. This is a much higher polygamous proportion than in any census study to date, but it is more reliable, since it makes full use of the supplemental sources available for determining a husband's status. If the number of households is reduced by 14 percent to allow for husbands who were unlikely to enter polygamy because of their presumed inactivity in the church, over 34 percent of all "eligible" households were polygamous in 1870, as were nearly two in five in 1880. Either method of defining the denominator produces unprecedented rates for plural marriage.

²³ Two studies have used census data for polygamous incidence rates. Anderson, *Desert Saints*, pp. 394–95, used manuscript schedules for southern Utah, finding that about 9 percent of households contained more than one wife. James E. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility in Nineteenth-Century America," *Population Studies* 30 (November 1976): 465–80, used aggregate census figures and an estimate of total polygamists to arrive at an 8.8 percent incidence.

²⁴ See Logue, "Belief and Behavior," Appendix A.

²⁵ Anderson, *Desert Saints*, pp. 394–95.

TABLE 3
PLURAL MARRIAGE RATES FOR CENSUS HOUSEHOLDS
AND HUSBANDS

	1870	1880
A. CENSUS HOUSEHOLDS		
Monogamous households	126	162
Polygamous households	53	80
Total households	179	242
Polygamous as % of all households	29.6	33.0
Polygamous as % of "eligible" households*	34.4	38.5
B. HUSBANDS		
Permanent monogamists in data set	212	
Ever-polygamous husbands in data set	101	
Total husbands	313	
Polygamists as % of all husbands	32.3	
Polygamists as % of "eligible" husbands*	37.5	

* Denominator reduced to estimate members who were "unapprovable" for plural marriage; see text.

Determining polygamy's incidence from other sources poses different problems. Published genealogies can be biased toward elites, and elite Mormons were especially likely to be polygamists. The analysts who found an incidence of 27 percent in one set of genealogies strongly suspected such a bias.²⁶ The St. George data set, however, includes nearly 90 percent of the families counted in the censuses and has no significant elite bias.²⁷ The usual method of figuring polygamous incidence from genealogies is to follow a group of men through their lives, noting which ones took plural wives and which did not. In addition to the 27 percent incidence found in one study, two other historians found plural marriage rates of 12 percent and 17 percent of married men.²⁸ An

²⁶ Smith and Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility."

²⁷ See Logue, "Belief and Behavior," Appendix A.

²⁸ Smith and Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility"; Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review* 10 (Summer 1956): 229-39; Dean L. May, "People on the Mormon Frontier: Kanab's Families of 1874," *Journal of Family History* 1 (Winter 1976): 169-92. The incidence for Kanab, though it is based on genealogies, reports the current status of each household rather than whether it eventually became polygamous; the author notes the possibility that the incidence may have actually been higher due to husbands with wives in other towns. Ivins's study has been especially influential, serving as the principal basis for the commonly expressed belief among historians that polygamy involved 10 percent or less of men. See Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 238-39; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, p. 164; Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 246; Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 199; Phillip R. Kunz, "One Wife or Several? A Comparative Study of Late

analogous rate can be calculated for St. George by dividing the husbands in the data set into those who ever married plurally and those who remained monogamous before and after coming to the town. The bottom half of table 3 shows these incidence rates. Again, just under a third of all men took a plural wife, increasing to 38 percent of all "eligible" men. The close agreement between the two methods shown in the table reaffirms, on the one hand, the unexpectedly high incidence of plural marriage in St. George and indicates, on the other hand, that census studies which show polygamy rates lower than those based on genealogies may be affected by inadequate data.

The best measure of polygamy's prevalence that can be calculated for St. George has not been attempted elsewhere. The St. George data set includes an entry and exit date for each person who lived in the town from 1861 to 1880; it is simple to divide each individual's time in the town (that is, his or her "person-years" in St. George) into monogamy and polygamy. Table 4 shows the results of this division, which was done in the following ways: Married years lived in St. George by a single-wife couple were counted as monogamous. If the husband took a plural wife, the status of all spouses changed at that moment, and they were thereafter counted as polygamous. Children followed the status of their parents, except that they were dropped from the count after age eighteen; this was done because monogamous-polygamous status is difficult to interpret for young unmarried adults. If these individuals married and remained in the town, however, they were re-entered into the tabulation as a new couple. To assess plural marriage's prevalence among those eligible for church approval, the person-years for husbands, wives, and children were reduced by 14 percent and the polygamous rate was re-figured on this base.

Table 4 shows a polygamous incidence for husbands similar to those found in table 3. One-third or more of their person-years were spent in polygamy,

TABLE 4

PERSON-YEARS LIVED IN ST. GEORGE BY MONOGAMOUS-POLYGAMOUS STATUS, 1861-1880

	Husbands	Wives	Children
Monogamy	2041.9	1199.3	6125.3
Polygamy	933.2	1954.6	5923.6
Total	2975.1	3153.9	12048.9
Polygamous %	31.4	62.0	49.2
Polygamous % of "eligible" person-years*	36.5	72.1	57.2

* Total person-years reduced to estimate members of families whose head was "unapprovable" for plural marriage; see text.

Nineteenth-Century Marriage in Utah" in Thomas G. Alexander, ed., *The Mormon People: Their Character and Traditions* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), pp. 53-73. Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?*, p. 444, while agreeing with the low overall incidence, suspects that "in some communities" polygamy included as many as 20 to 25 percent of men.

which again indicates that polygamy was more significant than most analysts assume. The person-years method also allows measurement from the viewpoint of wives and children. Except for the town of Kanab, where 30 percent of wives were in plural marriages, participation of women and children in polygamy has usually been gauged by speculation rather than measurement.²⁹

Table 4 shows that plural marriage in St. George affected family life deeply. Two-thirds of all wives' experience in the town before 1880 was in plural marriages, as were half of all child-years. Taking only those marriages where the husband could reasonably expect to have gotten permission to enter polygamy, the data are even more remarkable. In marriages where the husband "magnified his calling," almost three-quarters of wives' experience was spent in polygamy, and well over half the children's time was spent with a shared father. This indicates the profound familial impact of what was, for men, a minority practice. Not quite two in five of men in good church standing took plural wives, but in doing so they transformed the experience of the town's families. A shared husband was clearly the rule for wives; this meant that most women were eventually subjected to the strains of divided attention, which occasionally led to competition and jealousy.³⁰

It also meant, on the other hand, that most wives had the chance to try new household working arrangements. One polygamous household in St. George, for example, "had our work so systematized and so well ordered that we could with ease do a great deal," since the wives divided the domestic chores.³¹ The prevalence of polygamy also helps to explain the self-assurance of the "system of mutual support" that plural wives formed to make "the difficulties [of plural marriage] more bearable" and to fight the non-Mormons' anti-polygamy campaign.³² For example, one of St. George's leading plural wives could confidently proclaim that "it looks very odd to me nowadays to see a man living alone with one wife," which struck her as being "selfish, contracted, drawn up into a nut shell."³³ A child, especially one born into the home of parents who had been granted the church's ordinances, was likely to find one or more "aunts" and their children in the family by 1880. The confusion that this

²⁹ The figure for Kanab women is in Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), p. 229. May, "Mormon Families," notes that 24 percent of all Kanab residents were in plural families; see also note 61 below. Speculation on women and children is found in Ann Vest Lobb and Jill Mulvay Derr, "Women in Early Utah" in Richard D. Poll et al., eds., *Utah's History* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), pp. 337-56, who estimate that 25 percent of women lived in polygamy; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, estimates that between 10 and 20 percent were plural wives; Arrington and Bitton, *Mormon Experience*, p. 199, estimate that 12 percent of women and 10 percent of children were in plural families.

³⁰ See Macfarlane, *Yours Sincerely*, pp. 79-81; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, pp. 171-72; Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?*, especially chap. 14.

³¹ Cox Record, p. 32. See also Macfarlane, *Yours Sincerely*, p. 90; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, p. 169.

³² Lobb and Derr, "Women in Utah," p. 350.

³³ Artemesia Snow to St. George Female Relief Society, quoted in Andrew Karl Larson, *Erastus Snow: The Life of a Missionary and Pioneer for the Early Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), pp. 747-48.

arrangement could cause for children is evident in one description of forms of address in a St. George household. The second wife's children called the first wife "Ma"; the first wife's children addressed the second wife as "aunt," but called the third wife by her given name.³⁴ Table 4 shows that these unfamiliar situations were common among family members in St. George.

Measuring person-years has shown what the static analyses of censuses will not necessarily indicate — the accumulation of polygamous experience in families over time. If a family was monogamous at census-time, it did not always stay that way; sooner or later most wives and at least half the children of St. George spent time in plural marriages. One study of plural marriage's impact has concluded that its "new social patterns were never thoroughly embedded in the culture," because "monogamy remained the preferred choice of the majority."³⁵ The data from St. George indicate otherwise, showing that polygamy was deeply rooted in the experience of the townspeople.

THE AGE PATTERN OF POLYGAMY

The first marriages of eighty-four men who later became polygamists are included in the St. George data set, in addition to 192 women whose first marriage was to a current or eventual polygamist.³⁶ Table 5 shows polygamists'

TABLE 5
AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE OF POLYGAMISTS IN ST. GEORGE
AND UTAH PIONEERS STUDY

	St. George Monogamists	St. George Polygamists	Utah Pioneers Polygamists
MEN			
Mean	24.4	23.7	23.9*
Std. Dev.	4.6	3.5	-----
Median	23.4	23.4	-----
N	181	84	374
Significance of difference	p > .05		
WOMEN			
Mean	20.0	21.0	21.6*
Std. Dev.	3.7	4.5	-----
Median	19.4	20.2	-----
N	199	192	945
Significance of difference	p < .05		

* In families with three or fewer wives only.

SOURCE: Calculated from James E. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility in Nineteenth-Century America," *Population Studies* 30 (November 1976): 469.

³⁴ Macfarlane, *Yours Sincerely*, pp. 81, 90.

³⁵ Jeffrey, *Frontier Women*, p. 169.

³⁶ An additional four cases, or 1 percent of the total, had an unknown age at marriage and could not be estimated. See also Logue, "Belief and Behavior," Appendix A.

age at first marriage, compared with monogamous first marriages in St. George and with plural marriages from a study which sampled genealogies of Utah pioneers. The differences between St. George polygamists and the sample of pioneers are small; comparison with St. George monogamists, on the other hand, does suggest disparities. Polygamous men married slightly younger and women were a year older than in monogamous marriages. The difference between monogamous and polygamous men, however, is not statistically significant, and the medians for the groups are identical. The difference among St. George women, although it is statistically significant, is likewise modest. Women who married polygamists, though they were typically a year older than monogamous brides, were nonetheless younger than the average in any of the Eastern states shown in table 2.

Data on polygamists' ages when they married later wives indicate that plural marriage was concentrated in a narrow age range. Men in St. George typically waited until their late thirties to make a plural marriage, and most ended their marrying by their early forties (table 6). Only 20 percent of all eventual polygamists in St. George took a plural wife by thirty, and 75 percent of those who married three or fewer wives had all their marriages made by age

TABLE 6

HUSBAND'S AGE AT SEQUENTIAL MARRIAGES, POLYGAMISTS IN ST. GEORGE AND UTAH PIONEERS SAMPLES

Wife Number	HUSBAND'S AGE	
	St. George	Utah Pioneers
ONE		
Mean	23.7	23.9
Median	23.4	-----
N	84	374
Two		
Mean	38.1	36.1
Median	37.3	-----
N	75	227
THREE		
Mean	40.9	43.3
Median	39.2	-----
N	41	147
FOUR		
Mean	43.9	-----
Median	42.2	-----
N	11	-----

SOURCE: Calculated from Smith and Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility," p. 470.

forty-three; indeed, only two of the eleven men who took a fourth wife did so after age forty-six (these proportions are not shown in table 6). This is a more distinct clustering than in the analysis of Utah pioneers, where the age difference between second and third marriages was over twice as large as in St. George. It is clear that plural marriages in St. George were, as a rule, made in a husband's late thirties and were seldom made more than twice.

The compressed age-range of polygamous marriages was probably due to the action of countervailing forces on would-be polygamists. On the one hand, they undoubtedly felt the intense pressure by the church to take plural wives. Men who wanted to rise in the church, and to rise socially, needed to demonstrate, the sooner the better, their commitment to God's purposes by becoming polygamists. Moreover, since husbands' heavenly standing would depend in part on the size of their families, the sooner they expanded their families the better. On the other hand, there were equally effective forces delaying plural marriage. One has already been mentioned, the need to obtain approval for polygamy. Before demonstrating commitment to the church by taking plural wives, a man had to demonstrate the more basic forms of commitment, such as payment of tithing and participation in priesthood activities, which helped to qualify men for temple ordinances and then for plural marriage. Making oneself known as a faithful Mormon took time, especially in a period when Mormons were largely converts gathered from near and far. There was also an economic reason for waiting to marry again: supporting multiple households took money. The power of this incentive for delay is evident in the St. George data. Men who took a plural wife in their twenties were one-third wealthier than those who waited longer to marry plurally (\$2590 on average in the 1870 census versus \$1975). The late thirties were therefore the balance point between downward and upward pressures, when men who felt keenly their church's urging to form plural families had accumulated both the spiritual credit and material resources needed to become polygamists.

MARRIAGE AND PARENTAL AUTHORITY

Data on marriage-making suggest the degree to which parents in the past controlled the life-choices of their children. In New England, for example, analysts have found that parents regulated marriage by parceling out wealth to sons and "marrying off" daughters.³⁷ By controlling inheritances of their sons and the choices of their daughters, parents in early New England were able to influence when and whom their children married. This influence had largely disappeared, however, by the nineteenth century, when the "parental-run marriage system" became "participant-run."³⁸ In urban Philadelphia, on the

³⁷ Daniel Scott Smith, "Parental Power and Marriage Patterns: An Analysis of Historical Trends in Hingham, Massachusetts," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35 (August 1973): 419-28; Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970), especially chaps. 4, 6, 8; Daniel Blake Smith, "Mortality and Family in the Colonial Chesapeake," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8 (Winter 1978): 403-27.

³⁸ Smith, "Parental Power," p. 426. For evidence of a less rigid marriage structure developing earlier, see David Levine, "For Their Own Reasons": Individual Marriage Deci-

other hand, the nineteenth-century family still influenced marriage choices. Data from 1880 indicate that young adults in Philadelphia "did not feel prepared to marry until after they had discharged obligations to their family as well as accumulated some resources to support a family of their own."³⁹ The St. George data will likewise gauge the influence of family decisions versus other determinants of marriage.

The St. George data set includes 132 sons and 162 daughters who married from 1861 to 1880. Table 7 shows the timing and range of their marriages compared to first-married Philadelphians in 1880. The "period of preparation for adult responsibility" was clearly much shorter in St. George. Sons and daughters in St. George began marrying earlier and concentrated their marriages in a much narrower range than did Philadelphia residents. The age-range of the middle 80 percent was only half as large in St. George as in Philadelphia; 90 percent of St. George men who married were wed before twenty-eight and 90 percent of women by twenty-three, whereas both sexes in Philadelphia were into their thirties before reaching this point. Children of St. George families showed a pattern of marriage-timing that was clearly different from that of their Philadelphia peers.

TABLE 7

TIMING AND SPREAD OF MARRIAGES IN ST. GEORGE, 1861-1880
AND PHILADELPHIA, 1880

	AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE	
	St. George	Philadelphia
MEN		
1st decile	19.6	21.2
Median	22.8	26.8
Spread*	7.9	17.1
N	132	-----
WOMEN		
1st decile	16.7	18.5
Median	18.9	25.0
Spread	6.3	11.7
N	162	-----

* Range of the middle 80 percent of cases.

SOURCE: John Modell, Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Theodore Hershberg, "Social Change and Transitions to Adulthood in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Family History* 1 (Autumn 1976): 14.

sions and Family Life," *Journal of Family History* 7 (Fall 1982): 255-64; James M. Gallman, "Determinants of Age at Marriage in Colonial Perquimans County, North Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 39 (January 1982): 176-91.

³⁹ John Modell, Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Theodore Hershberg, "Social Change and Transitions to Adulthood in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Family History* 1 (Autumn 1976): 18. For an argument that parental control continued in nineteenth-century rural America as well, see James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 35 (January 1978): 3-32.

The difference between marriage in Philadelphia and St. George was not simply an urban-rural disparity. As noted at the beginning of this section, parents also influenced marriage in pre-industrial societies, but by handing down wealth to their offspring rather than by presiding over an economic preparation for marriage. Marriage in pre-industrial cultures is thus thought to have been tied to paternal mortality — the earlier fathers died, the earlier their children inherited and could marry.⁴⁰ Table 8, however, shows St. George sons' and daughters' marriage ages categorized by whether marriage preceded or followed a parent's death and reveals no pattern in the data. The death of a parent did not "trigger" a marriage; nor, on the other hand, did it substantially delay marriage. In one English parish, for example, a father's death *delayed* marriage, probably because the children were needed to help care for the family.⁴¹ In St. George, however, it is apparent that neither parent's death had an appreciable impact on marriage age. This stability of marriage-timing points to an important social function of plural marriage. Polygamy insured that substitute family care, by "aunts" and half-brothers and half-sisters, was readily available when a parent died. Table 4 has shown that half of the children in St. George had access to such care, which thus reduced the impact of orphanhood in the town.

Nor did birth order affect marriage in St. George. In societies where parents allocate their wealth before their death to establish their children in marriage, there are differences in marriage ages among earlier-born children and later ones, since earlier children benefit from their access to a previously undivided estate and can thus marry younger.⁴² Table 9 indicates, however, that

TABLE 8
MARRIAGES OF ST. GEORGE CHILDREN BY WHETHER PARENTS
WERE ALIVE OR DECEASED

	AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE			
	Father Living	Father Dead	Mother Living	Mother Dead
SONS				
Mean	23.2	23.7	23.1	23.9
Std. Dev.	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0
N	123	9	112	20
DAUGHTERS				
Mean	19.4	20.0	19.5	18.7
Std. Dev.	2.8	2.3	2.8	2.5
N	151	11	145	17

⁴⁰ See G. Ohlin, "Mortality, Marriage, and Growth in Pre-Industrial Populations," *Population Studies* 14 (March 1961): 190-97. In a colonial Virginia parish, men married nearly four years earlier when the father had died. D. B. Smith, "Mortality and Family." See also D. S. Smith, "Parental Power."

⁴¹ Levine, "For Their Own Reasons."

⁴² In seventeenth-century Andover, first sons married three years younger than second sons and two years younger than last sons. In early Hingham, Massachusetts, first sons mar-

TABLE 9

MARRIAGE AGE BY BIRTH ORDER, CHILDREN OF ST. GEORGE PARENTS

	AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE		
	First-born	Second-born	Later-born
SONS			
Mean	23.4	23.1	23.1
Std. Dev.	2.8	3.0	2.9
N	59	37	36
DAUGHTERS			
Mean	19.5	19.3	19.3
Std. Dev.	2.7	2.5	3.0
N	75	40	46

NOTE: Birth order refers to survivors to adulthood — e.g., first-born sons are first *surviving* sons.

birth order made virtually no difference in marriage ages of either sons or daughters in St. George.

There was thus no community-wide control of marriage by controlling inheritance, but it is also necessary to look at social and economic groups within St. George to see if family control differed by status. Three variables are usable for this test. Wealth and occupation as reported in 1870 are the best available measures of economic standing in the town. Occupations are divided into two broad groups for this analysis. Professionals and farmers, the highest categories in the Philadelphia Social History Project's occupation ladder,⁴³ are one group, and artisans and laborers, the lower occupations on the ladder, are the other group. A measure of social and ecclesiastical standing is marriage status: by taking plural wives, some men had demonstrated both their commitment to the church and their eligibility for advancement in this life and the next. Each child who married is thus assigned the wealth, occupation, and marriage status of his or her father; the effects of these variables on age at marriage are shown in Table 10. There was clearly no influence of either wealth or parents' marriage type on their children's age at marriage. Indeed, the only effect that is not statistically trivial is the delay in marriage for artisans' and laborers' sons. Even this delay was not long; artisans' and laborers' sons typically married at twenty-four, younger than men in any of the Eastern states listed in table 2. The data in table 10 reaffirm the absence of conventional pre-industrial forms of control of marriage-making. Parents did not, or could not, influence their

ried brides from wealthier families than did later sons. See Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 37; Smith, "Parental Power." For a view of inheritance and birth-order chances in modern settings, see E. R. Brennan, A. V. James, and W. T. Morrill, "Inheritance, Demographic Structure, and Marriage: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," *Journal of Family History* 7 (Fall 1982): 288-98.

⁴³ See Theodore Hershberg and Robert Dockhorn, "Occupational Classification," *Historical Methods Newsletter* 9 (March-June 1976): 59-98. Fathers not present in St. George in 1870 were assigned their 1880 occupation instead.

TABLE 10
SOCIOECONOMIC VARIABLES AND AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE,
CHILDREN OF ST. GEORGE PARENTS

MEN			
A. Father's total wealth, 1870			
Pearson's R, wealth and marriage age		-.15	
Significance		p>.05	
	Professional or farmer		Artisan or laborer
B. Father's occupation, 1870			
Mean age at marriage	22.6		24.0
Std. Dev.	2.6		3.1
N	70		58
Significance of difference		p<.05	
	Monogamous		Polygamous
C. Father's marriage type			
Mean age at marriage	23.5		22.9
Std. Dev.	3.0		2.7
N	70		62
Significance of difference		p>.05	
WOMEN			
A. Father's total wealth, 1870			
Pearson's R, wealth and marriage age		.06	
Significance		p>.05	
	Professional or farmer		Artisan or laborer
B. Father's occupation, 1870			
Mean age at marriage	19.3		19.6
Std. Dev.	2.3		3.3
N	89		69
Significance of difference		p>.05	
	Monogamous		Polygamous
C. Father's marriage type			
Mean age at marriage	19.3		19.5
Std. Dev.	2.7		2.8
N	69		93
Significance of difference		p>.05	

children's marriage by the usual economic calculus; inheritance or other economic contributions played no consistently critical part in the marriage pattern. Reasons for this lack of family influence will be offered after a discussion of opportunities for starting households in St. George.

MARRIAGE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

St. George was a farming community running out of farm land. Washington County had fewer than two people per square mile, but most of its terrain was wasteland. Only the lowlands within reach of the few streams were usable for farming. Over 40 percent of St. George's households were headed by farmers in 1870; to maintain its character under high fertility,⁴⁴ St. George needed either to accommodate more farmers or to export its "surplus" children who came of age. Its capacity for more farmers was clearly limited. Constrained by the need to irrigate their land, St. George residents made their farms small. Average farm size in Washington County in 1880 was 38 acres, second-smallest in Utah and among the smallest in the United States.⁴⁵ In comparison, thirty acres seems to have been the *minimum* farm size to support a family in colonial Andover, Massachusetts, a town that likewise had a farm land crisis; practically all probated estates in Andover were thirty acres or more.⁴⁶ However, 45 percent of farms in Washington County were *under twenty* acres.⁴⁷ Nor was there much potential farm land around St. George. Unimproved farm land amounted to about eleven acres per farmer, which was one-third the unimproved acreage available to farmers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the two most densely populated states in the nation.⁴⁸

Rather than subdivide its farms, Andover exported its sons. By the eighteenth century, more than half of Andover's sons eventually left the town after marriage, compared with less than a fourth in the seventeenth century.⁴⁹ All evidence indicates that St. George's land crisis was worse than Andover's, so it

⁴⁴ On St. George's fertility, see Logue, "Belief and Behavior," chap. 4.

⁴⁵ Counties outside Utah that had smaller farms than Washington, according to the 1880 census, were either urban areas or places that were unsuited for agriculture as indicated by a small number of farms.

⁴⁶ Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 224.

⁴⁷ Irrigation did increase the productivity of land in Utah, and one description of Utah agriculture concludes that twenty irrigated acres could support a family. See Leonard J. Arrington and Dean May, "'A Different Mode of Life': Irrigation and Society in Nineteenth Century Utah," *Agricultural History* 49 (January 1975): 3–20. In St. George, however, frequent floods on the only substantial stream eliminated most of irrigation's benefits; the food shortages in the town were grim evidence. For a fuller discussion of famine in St. George, see Logue, "Belief and Behavior," chap. 5.

⁴⁸ This estimate of potential farm land per farmer is a modified version of a calculation reported by Dean May in "The Making of Saints: The Mormon Town as a Setting for the Study of Cultural Change," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45 (Winter 1977): 75–92. Using an estimate of landowners and the 1880 census, May estimated 14.5 acres of improved land and three acres unimproved per landowner in Kane County. The St. George estimate uses farmers only, who were less than one-fourth of households, instead of May's two-thirds estimate. Computed by May's method, unimproved acreage in Washington County would have been 4.5 instead of 11.

⁴⁹ Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 212.

would not be surprising to find a larger outflow of sons than in Andover. However, 53 percent of the 132 sons who married from 1861 to 1880 took up residence in St. George at least long enough to begin raising children. Although 47 percent is a *minimum* out-migration figure, since some of these sons left later, the other 53 percent did find an initial opportunity in the town, demonstrated by their setting up a household there.⁵⁰ Daughters were also as likely to live in the town as to move elsewhere after marriage. Of the 162 daughters married in the period, 48 percent remained in St. George. About half of the non-migrants of each sex married a fellow resident of St. George. Similar figures were found regarding endogamy in Andover and Hingham, another early Massachusetts town.⁵¹ Children raised in St. George thus had some hope of marrying a fellow resident if they chose.

That the town did not more often export its sons and daughters in the face of an extreme farm land shortage indicates a different solution to population pressure than in Andover. St. George's solution was to accommodate more non-farmers. Between 1870 and 1880 the number of farmers in St. George declined slightly. The number of skilled workers rose slightly at the same time, but the most significant change occurred in households headed by unskilled workers, which increased from 18 to 57. Unskilled workers, four-fifths of whom simply called themselves "laborers" when asked by the census-taker, were the younger household heads of St. George: their median age was thirty-one in 1880, whereas the medians for farmers and skilled workers were near fifty. An unskilled laborer did a variety of jobs, hauling wood or produce to the silver mines twenty miles away, working around the temple, or spending "the greater part of his time in the surrounding settlements going from one place to another, wherever he could get a job to work."⁵² Having started a family on the earnings from this kind of work, a laborer could hope for a more secure place in the town, perhaps even a farm. The median age of farmers in St. George did not change from 1870 to 1880, which meant that new young farmers partially offset the aging of current farmers (death and out-migration of older farmers offset it as well). St. George was thus able to compensate for its shortage of farm land and to offer opportunities for generational continuity in a changing economic context.

THE STRUCTURE OF MARRIAGE-MAKING

In contrast to the assumed practice in pre-industrial societies, we have seen that families in St. George did not regularly control their children's marriage-making to conserve familial resources; neither orphanhood nor position in the family nor the family's economic standing made an important difference in

⁵⁰ Establishing a household was the standard practice after marriage in St. George. Only seven of the town's 179 households in 1870 contained married children, as did eight of the 242 households in 1880.

⁵¹ Greven, *Four Generations*, p. 210; Smith, "Parental Power."

⁵² Life Sketch of George Frederick Jarvis, typescript, Brigham Young University Library, p. 5. See also Memories of George W. Fawcett, typescript, Library-Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

children's marriage ages. But neither did St. George marriages conform to the marriage pattern in a contemporary commercial city in which starting a family was less dependent on access to inheritance than on a son's or daughter's own accumulated wealth. St. George children married earlier and in a more tightly defined age span than did Philadelphians, indicating that a waiting period for marriage was unimportant. But the absence of consistent societal determinants does not finally support the contention that individuals in the past married "for their own reasons";⁵³ there were other, more effective determinants of marriage.

The clustering of marriages of St. George children compared with Philadelphia is initial evidence against a non-determined marriage age. This concentration of marriage becomes clearer when the children are compared to their parents and to other American groups whose marriages were in a narrow age-range. Table 11 shows the proportion of all marriages that occurred at the peak three ages among St. George parents and children and among three early American populations whose marrying has been termed "concentrated."⁵⁴ St. George children clearly stand out from almost all the other groups; only the North Carolina men show a comparable clustering. Figure 1 compares the two most concentrated groups, the St. George children and the North Carolina sample, showing the percentage of all marriages occurring at each year of age. The magnitude of the peak year is almost the same for men in the two groups, but the St. George group shows a clear climb and descent, whereas the Perquimans County line fluctuates between smaller peaks and indeed rises at the end of the twenties. St. George women show a higher and more domi-

TABLE 11
COMPARATIVE CLUSTERING OF MARRIAGE AGES

	PEAK 3 YEARS AS % OF ALL MARRIAGES	
	Men	Women
St. George in migrant parents	32.0	39.4
St. George children	46.9	50.6
Hampton, N.H., born before 1720	34.2	37.2
Perquimans County, N.C., born before 1741	45.9	43.3
Middle-Atlantic Quakers, 18th century	34.7	32.3

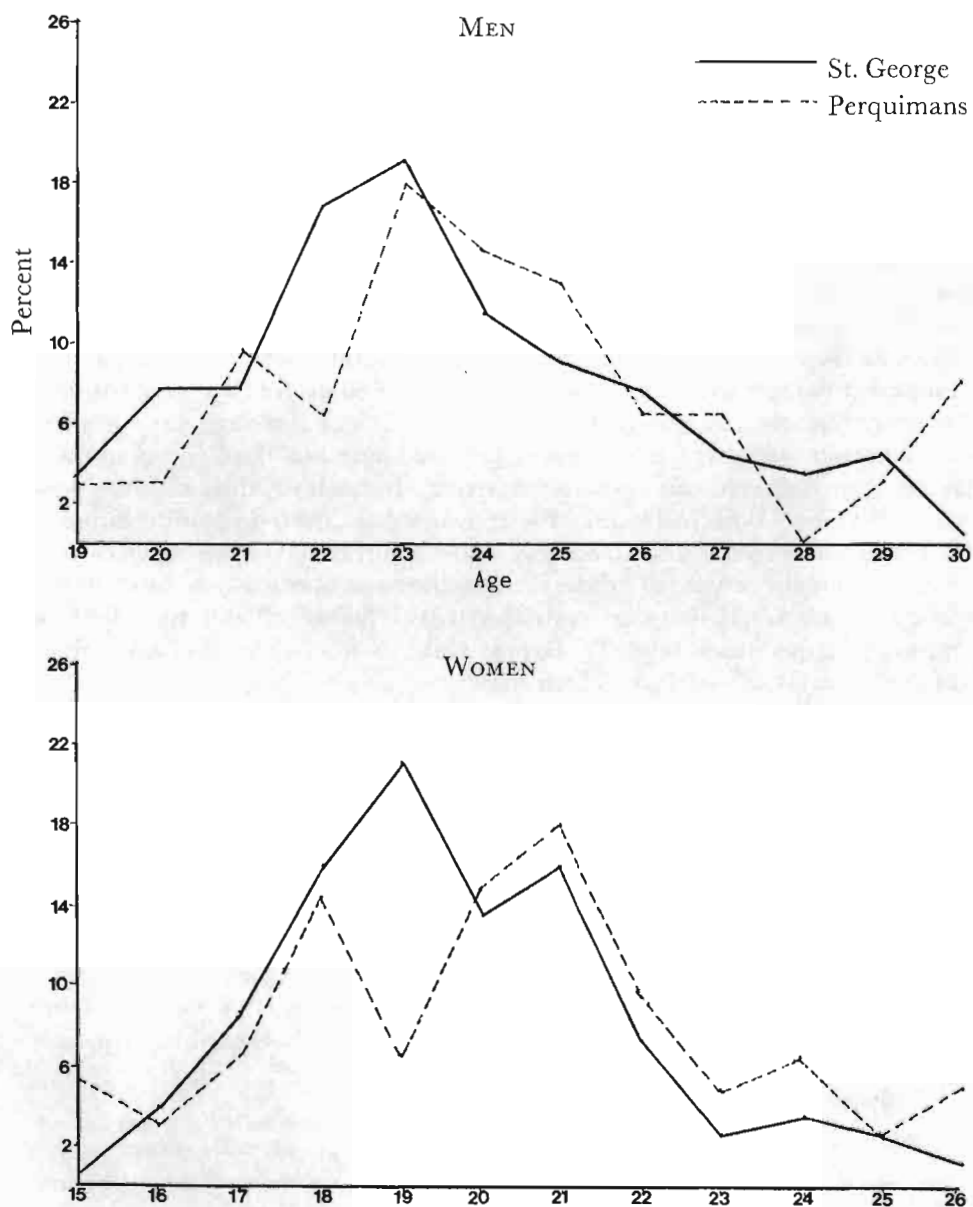
SOURCES: Calculated from James Matthew Gallman, "Relative Ages of Colonial Marriages," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14 (Spring 1984): 614-15; calculated from Robert V. Wells, "Quaker Marriage Patterns in a Colonial Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 29 (July 1972): 418.

⁵³ See Levine, "For Their Own Reasons."

⁵⁴ Marriage in the New Hampshire and North Carolina groups shown in the table was characterized by a "fairly tight concentration of cases in a limited range of marriage ages." James Matthew Gallman, "Relative Ages of Colonial Marriages," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14 (Spring 1984): 616n. Marriages of Middle-Atlantic Quakers "were concentrated in just a few years." Robert V. Wells, "Quaker Marriage Patterns in a Colonial Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 29 (July 1972): 417.

FIGURE 1

PERCENT OF TOTAL MARRIAGES BY AGE, ST. GEORGE CHILDREN
AND PERQUIMANS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA



SOURCE: Calculated from James Matthew Gallman, "Relative Ages of Colonial Marriages," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14 (Spring 1984): 615.

nant peak year of marriage, reflecting the clustering of more than half their marriages in a three-year span. The structure of St. George marriage-making is not in inheritance practices or socioeconomic position, but in this extraordinary uniformity of marriage age for each sex. Much more than their parents had done, St. George children made for themselves a "time of marriage." Men married in the first half of the twenties and women wed between eighteen and twenty.

Analysts of early American populations that had clustered marriage ages have attributed their findings to "custom,"⁵⁵ but there was no custom for the structure of marriage in St. George. In-migrant parents came from a number of cultures that probably had a variety of marriage practices. Although St. George parents' marriage frequency resembled the early American groups, their ages showed much more variation than those of their children.⁵⁶ Indeed, the experience of St. George children differed from their parents' circumstances in two ways that undoubtedly affected their marriage-making. First, St. George children were among the first generation to be born and raised Mormons, whereas their parents had been converted to Mormonism. One-third of the immigrant parents with church records were married *before* they were baptized as Mormons; the church's doctrine on the urgency of marriage did not affect their decision to marry, and some of the remaining two-thirds no doubt also made their marriage plans before converting. In contrast, their children were overwhelmingly born in Utah and were exposed to Mormon culture throughout their unmarried years. In Sunday school and regular worship services, they were continually instructed in Mormon doctrine and obedience to the church.⁵⁷ The church's admonitions on marriage in the 1860s and later were likewise directed at this generation. St. George children were thus carefully trained in the centrality of marriage in their lives.

The second key difference between parents and their children was in the composition of their marriage markets. Many of the older generation had found their first spouses in the Eastern states or in Europe, where there were no widespread imbalances in the sex ratio to constrain their marriage choices. In Utah in the 1860s and later, there was likewise no serious sex ratio bias,⁵⁸ but the rules of the market had changed. Unmarried men did not now compete solely with other single men for wives; married men seeking plural wives were also part of the competition. As a result, in St. George, where there was no numerical imbalance in the marriage market,⁵⁹ there was in reality a "shortage" of women caused by competition from married men. This competition was, to be sure, somewhat lessened by immigration. Polygamists frequently

⁵⁵ Gallman, "Relative Ages"; Wells, "Quaker Marriage."

⁵⁶ The standard deviations of immigrant parents' marriage ages are 4.6 for men and 4.5 for women; for children, the standard deviations are 2.9 for men and 2.7 for women.

⁵⁷ For reports of Sunday school instruction in St. George, see Walker Diary, entries after April 1873, *passim*.

⁵⁸ See Smith and Kunz, "Polygyny and Fertility."

⁵⁹ Unmarried person-years lived by men between nineteen and twenty and by women between sixteen and seventeen, just before large proportions began to marry, were 181.5 and 192.9, respectively.

took foreign brides; nearly half the brides in St. George plural marriages were born abroad, whereas less than a quarter of monogamous wives were immigrants. But immigration did not supply all the brides for polygamists, and it could not prevent a marriage "squeeze." A squeeze tends to reduce both the mean and the variation in marriage age for the minority sex, because they are in greater demand as spouses.⁶⁰ As long as polygamy continued, a squeeze against men was a key feature of the St. George marriage market.

Children of St. George residents were thus under two kinds of pressure, one cultural and one circumstantial, to marry soon after maturity. They responded, as we have seen, with a remarkable clustering of marriage in a short age-span. This phenomenon crowded out the effects of every traditional influence on marriage-making. The church stood directly behind both kinds of pressure in its advocacy of marriage in general and plural marriage in particular. Indeed, although marriage elsewhere had become "participant-run," in St. George it was neither participant-run nor family-run, but instead church-run. The Mormon church had imposed a structure on marriage-making, one more comprehensive and effective than any its families could produce.

CONCLUSIONS

The people of St. George readily accepted the new meanings for marriage proposed by their belief system. The generation that came to the town as parents listened to their church's promises that plural marriage was the means to higher status on earth and in the afterlife, and they responded by making polygamy the keystone of their social structure. Excluding those families where the husband was probably ineligible for polygamy because of his inactivity in the church, over a third of all husbands' time, nearly three-quarters of all woman-years, and well over half of all child-years were spent in polygamy before 1880. Polygamy was therefore far from the marginal practice that previous studies have described. The participation of men was probably limited chiefly by the effective shortage of women; for wives and children, unfamiliar household rules and family relationships were the rule and not the exception. Perhaps St. George was unusual in this predominance of polygamy, but until other Mormon communities are studied with similar methods, any polygamous figures for the whole Mormon region should be viewed skeptically.⁶¹

For the second generation in St. George, those raised in Mormon households rather than converted as adults, first marriage also had a new meaning. Marriage was still an economic event, insofar as sons and daughters left their

⁶⁰ See Robert Schoen, "Measuring the Tightness of a Marriage Squeeze," *Demography* 20 (February 1983): 61-78.

⁶¹ Lowell C. Bennion is conducting a study that links census households in 1880 with family group sheets to arrive at polygamy incidence figures for a sample of Utah towns; he is calculating polygamy's incidence for women and children as well as husbands. Preliminary findings show that although St. George's incidence was above average, it was by no means unique. Bennion presented a preliminary report at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, Provo, Utah, May 1984. See Lowell "Ben" Bennion, "The Incidence of Mormon Polygamy in 1880: 'Dixie' versus Davis Stake," in this volume of the *Journal of Mormon History*.

parents for their own households. Its timing, however, was not determined by the accumulation of a critical mass of resources under the family's watchful eye. Marriage-making was a religious act, supervised by the church; it was indeed a member's sacred duty to marry at maturity. Faced with this obligation and with competition from married men for brides, men and women of the second generation made their decisions promptly. But marriage was not simply submission to the church; it was instead a decisive step toward controlling one's own fate. Men and women who married and had their bond sealed for eternity were eligible for higher offices in this life and for heaven's higher kingdoms in the next life. Marriage was also the first step toward the large family over which the husband and wife could rule through eternity.

Both generations, by heeding their leaders' urgings on marriage, could simultaneously benefit themselves and the church. The data in this essay have shown that the church was remarkably successful in penetrating family life to influence the critical decision to marry. Mormon leaders and their theology instructed members to marry, and marry they did, creating a sharply defined time of marriage in St. George.

The Incidence of Mormon Polygamy in 1880: “Dixie” versus Davis Stake

By Lowell “Ben” Bennion

For all that has been written about Mormon polygamy, as practiced from 1843 until 1904, we still have a very hazy picture of its incidence. Not only do estimates of its extent vary widely (from two to twenty percent), they often fail to specify one or both of the populations (numerator and denominator) used to calculate the percent.¹ While historians have sensed variation in the number of plural marriages performed from year to year, one seldom finds any indication that the number of plural families differed from place to place.² In spite of the uncertainty as to just how many lived in polygamy where and when, most scholars (not unlike most Latter-day Saints) have minimized its importance. A recent and widely acclaimed book concludes “that this form of marriage appears never to have become very popular with either men or women in the Mormon areas of settlement in the Great Basin region.”³

In the preceding essay of this issue of the *Journal of Mormon History*, Larry Logue has demonstrated that one can reconstruct a remarkably clear

Lowell “Ben” Bennion is professor of geography at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California. This paper draws in part from one presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mormon History Association, Provo, Utah, May 11, 1984.

¹ This point was central to the paper presented by Ellen B. Stone and me at the MHA Annual Meeting, Ogden, Utah, May 7, 1982, and entitled “What Percent of Which Population Practiced Polygamy? The Case of Springville, Utah.” A revised version may appear next year in a volume edited by David J. Whittaker and Lorie Winder Stromberg.

² For a rare reference, relegated to a footnote, see Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 331. Foster credits S. George Ellsworth rather than Charles M. Hatch for the research that shows a wide range of incidence within Cache County.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

picture of Mormon marital patterns. Through his effective use of data and methods, he has found that plural marriage in St. George was much more extensive than previous studies had led him to expect. However, until Logue-like surveys of many other Utah towns are completed, how can we know how typical or exceptional the "capital" of "Utah's Dixie" was? And without first mapping its temporal and areal extent for all of Utah, how can we ever assess the full significance of polygamy for Mormon society?

My geographical bent prompts me to apply a spatial approach to the study of plural marriage instead of the period analysis employed by Logue. Ideally the two approaches should complement one another, since they provide different views of a complex phenomenon.⁴ My own interest in polygamy began when I joined Melvyn Hammarberg and Dean May in a project designed to profile the population of the Mormon Culture Area as of 1880.⁵ While recording census data, I discovered more plural wives than expected and found them distributed quite unevenly. I subsequently started a survey of a large sample of Mormon settlements for 1880,⁶ attempting to determine what percent of the LDS population lived in polygamous households when the census was taken.

For several reasons that year appears to be the best single point in time for mapping polygamy across Mormon Country. The federal census taken in June of 1880 was the first to specify each person's relationship to the head of household, making it easier to identify plural wives. (A few census-takers even noted "second" or "third" wife.) More importantly, 1880 coincided with a pivotal turning period in the evolution of polygamy among the Mormons. The census marked the end of the Brigham Young era and the time when "plurality" probably reached its maximum extent relative to the number of people involved. The census also preceded the decade of federal raids which led to the Manifestos of 1890 and 1904 and the decline, if not the death, of Mormon polygamy. The 1890 census would not have served as well, even if it had escaped being destroyed by fire, because by then so many polygamists had gone "underground."

The few attempts to determine the degree of variation in the incidence of polygamy have suffered from both limited scope and inadequate use of available data.⁷ Although the scale of our 1880 survey precludes a thorough search of sources, we have combined use of the most important materials — the census manuscript schedules and LDS family group sheets.⁸ The former enables us to

⁴ This idea is the subject of a major treatise by D. W. Meinig, "The Continuous Shaping of America: A Prospectus for Geographers and Historians," *The American Historical Review* 83 (December 1978): 1186-1217.

⁵ For a description of the original project, see Melvyn Hammarberg, "A Sampling Design for Mormon Utah, 1880," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 7 (Winter 1977): 453-76.

⁶ Preliminary results from this survey were presented in my "Patterns of Mormon Polygamy in 1880," MHA Annual Meeting, Provo, Utah, May 11, 1984. I plan to expand the sample and the paper for publication next year.

⁷ Logue has described these problems in detail in "Belief and Behavior in a Mormon Town: Nineteenth-Century St. George, Utah," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1984), pp. 90-93.

⁸ I use "our"/"we" advisedly because of the invaluable research assistance I have received from my sister, Ellen B. Stone, based in Salt Lake City.

identify the "obvious" polygamists, men whose wives were living with or near them. The latter serves to verify the obvious cases but becomes essential for checking "possible" ones.

Ideally, of course, we should examine every married person's status, but to save time we exercised some degree of selection. In many instances the census offers a clue, such as 1) a "married" (vs. "widowed" or "divorced") woman listed as head of a household, 2) a wide age gap between husband and wife (plural wives often being much younger than the first wife), or 3) children in the same home having mothers with different birth places. Like Logue,⁹ we soon sensed from our data that Mormon men born after about 1840 (or 1845) were less likely to enter polygamy than those born before and that most polygamists did not take a plural wife until they had turned thirty-five (or forty). We therefore checked only those men listed in 1880 as forty or over. We hoped to catch the occasional younger polygamists on their parents' group sheets.

Even if we checked every male listed by the census against a family group sheet, we could not count on locating every polygamist or plural wife. Rarely can one find a family group sheet for every married male even in the smallest town. Although someone has submitted a form for most polygamists, often there is little or no information available for one or more of the wives — particularly those who had no children. Data gaps sometimes make even known polygamists' marital status for 1880 uncertain. These difficulties mean that the percent calculated *underestimates* the extent of the practice, especially in the case of the larger, more complex towns. How much "under" will become evident when we compare our findings for St. George with Logue's.

The percentage of Mormons involved in plural marriage can be determined in any number of ways depending on one's data and purpose. The way selected seems less important than specifying the basis for figuring the percent. I include in the numerator not only the male polygamists but also all wives, children, and other relatives living in their home when the census was taken. I also add any "plural widows" and their children living in the same town because a polygamous association seems to have survived the death of the husband/father. The denominator includes the total population except for anyone denoted in the census margin as "Josephite" (members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) or *pure* "Gentile." I define as "pure" those Gentiles who were not tied to a Mormon family — active, "apostate," or "doubtful" — by marriage.¹⁰

One could calculate a percent on the basis of households rather than individuals, but in my opinion the former do not measure the full extent of polygamy as well as the latter. By 1880 younger (under forty) and therefore

⁹ Logue, p. 101.

¹⁰ In effect, only unrelated household residents, usually servants or boarders, are omitted from the numerator. Except in Salt Lake City and the railroad and mining towns, most of those listed by the census as "Gentiles" were the spouses or children of Mormons and therefore are counted as part of the denominator. The marginal notation of religious affiliation shows the importance attached by Mormon leaders, one assumes, to labeling everyone. However, the difficulty of reading some abbreviations and the discrepancies between census and church figures in many towns suggest cautious use of these religious labels.

monogamous couples accounted for a large part of the households in most towns. This second generation of Mormons may have come from polygamous families in many instances, but they had less chance or inclination to establish polygamous households of their own because of rising American opposition to the practice.

Rather than present the same small sample of towns covered in my 1984 Provo paper, I have decided to try a different geographical tack. In this essay I shall canvass the entire population of two LDS stakes, one from the north, the other from the south of Utah. Larry Logue's focus on St. George almost mandated the selection of "Dixie" — the city's hinterland. I chose it even after remembering the difficulty that the early church historian Andrew Jensen had inspecting it in 1892, "owing to the very extensive territory over which its numerous wards and branches are scattered."¹¹ From the north I picked an area much more compact but of similar population size, namely Davis Stake.¹² I shall describe each area's geography of polygamy, beginning with Dixie, then attempt a comparative analysis of the two patterns.

That St. George had such a high proportion of its population in polygamy should not surprise anyone familiar with an obscure report compiled by a stake clerk with three wives. As early as 1877, when LDS wards and stakes first submitted regular statistical reports, James G. Bleak added separate columns for plural families (i.e., males), wives, and children (see table 1, with percents

TABLE 1
PLURAL FAMILIES IN ST. GEORGE STAKE, 1877

Ward	Polygamists	Wives	Children	Total in Polygamy	Total LDS	Percent
St. George 1	14	31	51	96	298	32.2
St. George 2	15	31	77	123	219	56.2
St. George 3	20	34	102	156	393	39.7
St. George 4	28	79	264	371	573	64.7
Hebron	3	5	28	36	179	20.1
Leeds	---	---	---	---	---	---
Panaca	2	7	21	30	267	11.2
Pine Valley	7	15	30	52	224	23.2
Pinto	8	16	42	66	142	46.5
Rockville	---	---	---	---	---	---
Santa Clara	9	23	76	108	214	50.5
Toquerville	9	21	70	100	374	26.7
Virgin City	2	4	7	13	315	4.1
Washington	---	---	---	---	---	---

¹¹ *Deseret News*, April 26, 1892. Jensen's tour of the St. George Stake lasted seven weeks and took him nearly 500 miles "over the worst roads imaginable." For his complete account of the trip, see also the reports dated March 21, 23, and April 2, 5, and 25.

¹² In 1880 the church recorded just over five thousand members in Davis and just under five thousand in St. George Stake, out of a total membership of over one hundred twenty-five thousand located mostly within the Intermountain West.

added). The four St. George wards, with over one-third of the stake's population, numbered seventy-seven polygamists (compared to the eighty counted by Logue for 1880). With their wives and children, they accounted for over half the population of Utah's first "temple city." However, in the stake's remaining wards (with no figures reported for Washington, Rockville, Leeds) polygamous families made up less than one-fourth of the membership.

Construction of a second table for 1880, with all census precincts included, permits some comparison of census data with Bleak's figures, and, in the case of

TABLE 2
PLURAL FAMILIES IN ST. GEORGE STAKE, JUNE 1880

Census Precinct (by County)	Total in Polygamy	Total LDS	Percent
WASHINGTON CO.			
Gunlock	30	156	21.2
Harrisburg/Leeds	30	256	11.7
Hebron	27	80	33.8
Pine Valley	39	230	17.0
Pinto	42	99	42.4
Price City	25	87	28.7
St. George	532	1332	39.9
Santa Clara	29	194	14.9
Washington	205	537	38.2
KANE CO.			
Bellevue	14	58	24.1
Duncan's Retreat	18	79	22.8
Grafton	11	71	15.5
Harmony	75	150	50.0
Kanab*	95	314	30.4
Kanarraville	55	174	31.6
Orderville*	342	514	66.6
Rockville	22	215	10.2
Shunesburg	27	82	32.9
Springdale	18	50	36.0
Toquerville	133	317	42.0
Virgin City	28	254	11.0
LINCOLN CO., NEV.			
Bunkerville†	52	130	40.0
Panaca	12	264	4.6

* Net part of St. George Stake.

† Including the few LDS families in 34th District, Mohave Co., Ariz., which was mostly Indian.

St. George, with Logue's.¹³ For St. George, the closeness of Bleak's and Logue's counts suggests an accurate count. Bennion's somewhat lower number (sixty-six) seems to underscore the point that his method undercounts the number of polygamists.

In fact, however, a comparison reveals that "The chief difference in our lists of polygamists is in definitions."¹⁴ Logue counts the ten men I call "ex-polygamists" who by 1880 had only one wife due to death or divorce. He also includes "single" widows of polygamists, whereas I list only "plural" ones, i.e., two or more still living in St. George. Each of us adds a few names overlooked or questioned by the other. With Logue's permission I have incorporated his list (as table 3) and modified it to show where we agree and diverge.

This new list points up the difficulty of ascertaining plural status from the census alone. The number in parentheses indicates how many wives each polygamist had just in St. George (or tiny nearby Middletown). Even spouses in St. George proved tough to connect at times, especially in cases where a young plural wife still lived at home with her parents — sometimes under her maiden name. At least eight of these men had only one wife in St. George. The others lived elsewhere in Dixie or as far away as Salt Lake. Roughly twice as many plural wives had husbands living, at least temporarily, somewhere other than at St. George. Such men, quite legitimately, occasionally appear twice in the 1880 Utah census.

Initially, the large discrepancy between the 1877 and 1880 percents for Santa Clara (50.5 vs. 14.9) undermined my confidence in Bleak's report (or my methodology). In time, however, I realized it illustrates how rapidly the marital make-up of a population could change "on the ragged edge" of Utah's southern frontier.¹⁵ In 1877, presumably after Bleak made his count, Bishop Edward Bunker and several other families left Santa Clara to reestablish a united order on the Nevada side of the Virgin River at a site that became known as Bunkerville. Only Bunker and two or three other men were polygamists, but Bunker's and Dudley Leavitt's families together numbered nearly fifty persons — most of Bunkerville's polygamous population. (And almost all of the village's monogamous majority were related by blood or marriage to Bunker!)

Factors besides migration could also change the plural status of a given population, as the case of one of Bishop Bunker's counselors demonstrates. Myron Abbott moved to Dixie from Box Elder County in 1877, just after his two plural wives had divorced him. He soon remarried a Leavitt (whose Santa Clara father became a polygamist in 1882) and moved his new wife to Bunkerville. A year later she heard a rumor that her husband was eyeing a second wife, and she went into a "great rage." However, by 1885 she could accept the

¹³ The two tables are not fully comparable, if only because the boundaries of wards and census precincts did not coincide in several Kane County cases.

¹⁴ From a personal letter written to me by Larry Logue, September 14, 1984.

¹⁵ The title of Juanita Brooks' biography, subtitled *The Life and Times of Dudley Leavitt* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1973). Leavitt, with his five wives, helped colonize several of Dixie's settlements.

TABLE 3
POLYGAMISTS IN ST. GEORGE

ALGER, JOHN (1)	KELSEY, Easton (2)
ANDRUS, James (2)	LANG, William (2)
ANDRUS, Milo (1)	LAUB, George (ex-P)
ASHBY, Nathaniel (2)	LISTON, Elizabeth (Widow)
BARLOW, Catherine & Mary (Widows)	LUND, Eliza
BARNEY, Edson (2)	MACFARLANE, John M. (3)
BLAIR, Eliza	MANSFIELD, Mathew (2)
BLAKE, Benjamin (2)	MATHIS, John (1)
BLAKE, Frederick (2) (? by Bennion)	McALLISTER, John D. T. (3)
BLEAK, James G. (3)	McARTHUR, Daniel D. (3)
BOOTH, Elizabeth (? by Bennion)	McDONALD, Elizabeth
BRYNER, Casper (2)	MILES, Jane (? by Bennion)
BURT, William (1) (? by Bennion)	MILLER, Henry W. (2)
CALKIN, M. (Widow)	MILNE, David (3)
CANNON, David (3)	MOODY, John M. (2)
CARPENTER, William H. (2) (? by Logue)	NELSON, Aaron (ex-P)
CARTER, William (3)	NIXON, Johanna
CLARK, Lorenzo (2)	OXBORROW, Joseph (2)
COX, Isaiah (3)	PERKINS, William (2)
DALTON, Charles W. (1)	RIDING, Christopher (ex-P)
EARL, Margaret E. (Widow)	ROMNEY, Miles P. (3)
EMPEY, William (2)	SANDERS, Amanda & Mary (Widows)
EYRING, Henry (2)	SANDERS, John F. (ex-P)
FARNSWORTH, Benjamin F. (2) (? by Logue)	SEEGMILLER, Daniel (ex-P)
FOREMASTER, Frederick (ex-P)	SLAGOWSKI, Xavier (2)
GARDNER, Mary A.	SMITH, CHARLES (2)
GATES, Mary E. & Emma F.	SMITH, William (3)
GUBLER, Anna (Widow)	SNOW, Erastus (4)
HAMMOND, Joseph (2)	SPENCER, Emily (Widow)
HARDY, Josiah G. (1) (missed by Bennion)	SQUIRE, William (ex-P)
HARDY, Samuel B. (ex-P)	TERRY, Charles (ex-P)
HARDY, Warren (3)	TERRY, William A. (2)
HEMENWAY, Luther S. (2)	THOMAS, Harriet
HENDRIX, Daniel L. (2)	THOMPSON, William H. (2)
HENDRIX, Edward A. (1)	WALKER, Charles L. (2)
HUNT, Isaac (2)	WEAVER, William (missed by Bennion)
IVINS, Israel (2)	WHIPPLE, Caroline
JARVIS, Eleanor & Rosina	WHITEHEAD, Adolphus R. (2)
JEFFREY, Mary A.	WINSOR, Anson (ex-P)
JOHNSON, Joseph E. (2)	WOODBURY, Orin (1)
JUDD, Thomas (2) (? by Logue)	WOODWARD, George (2)
KEATE, Susannah	WOOLLEY, Edwin D. (2)
	WORTHEN, Sarah

prospect (at least he recorded no protest), and he became a polygamist once again.¹⁶ Although the plural wife remained in Santa Clara, she too eventually (1893) divorced him. All of his children also sooner or later moved in or out of polygamy as his or their marital status changed.

Transferring the 1880 table to a map of Dixie's towns by population size (see figure 1) suggests several interesting patterns.¹⁷ Perhaps the most striking is the fact that all of the larger towns (over five hundred) show a high percent (roughly 40 or more) living in polygamy. Among the smaller towns a much wider range of percents appears, reflecting perhaps their very smallness and economic instability. Clearly the strongest towns attracted the largest number of polygamists, some of whom spread their wives out among the smaller places and thereby acquired additional land. Percents along the Upper Virgin Valley are especially low, except in Shunesburg and Springdale, where, according to Andrew Jenson, the Saints were "living in a scattered condition."

One notable exception to this general equation of polygamy with prosperity may lie in the Leeds area, where the percent barely exceeds 10. By 1892 at least, Jenson thought Leeds's inhabitants were "perhaps better off as a whole than any of their Dixie neighbors," owing to the town's proximity to Silver Reef.¹⁸ For that very reason, however, Leeds had drawn a far larger Gentile element (close to one-third of its population) than any other Dixie town—Silver Reef, of course, excepted. Perhaps even a sizeable part of Leeds' male Mormons, like the few in Silver Reef (Dixie's only Gentile center), were not inclined to share any mining wealth with more than one spouse. A similar situation obtained in Nevada's Panaca, near the mining camp of Pioche. Its polygamous element, more difficult to calculate because Nevada census-takers made no note of one's religion, was probably the smallest one in Dixie. Even its 1880 bishop (or his wife) preferred monogamy, though his successor took a second wife three years after assuming office.

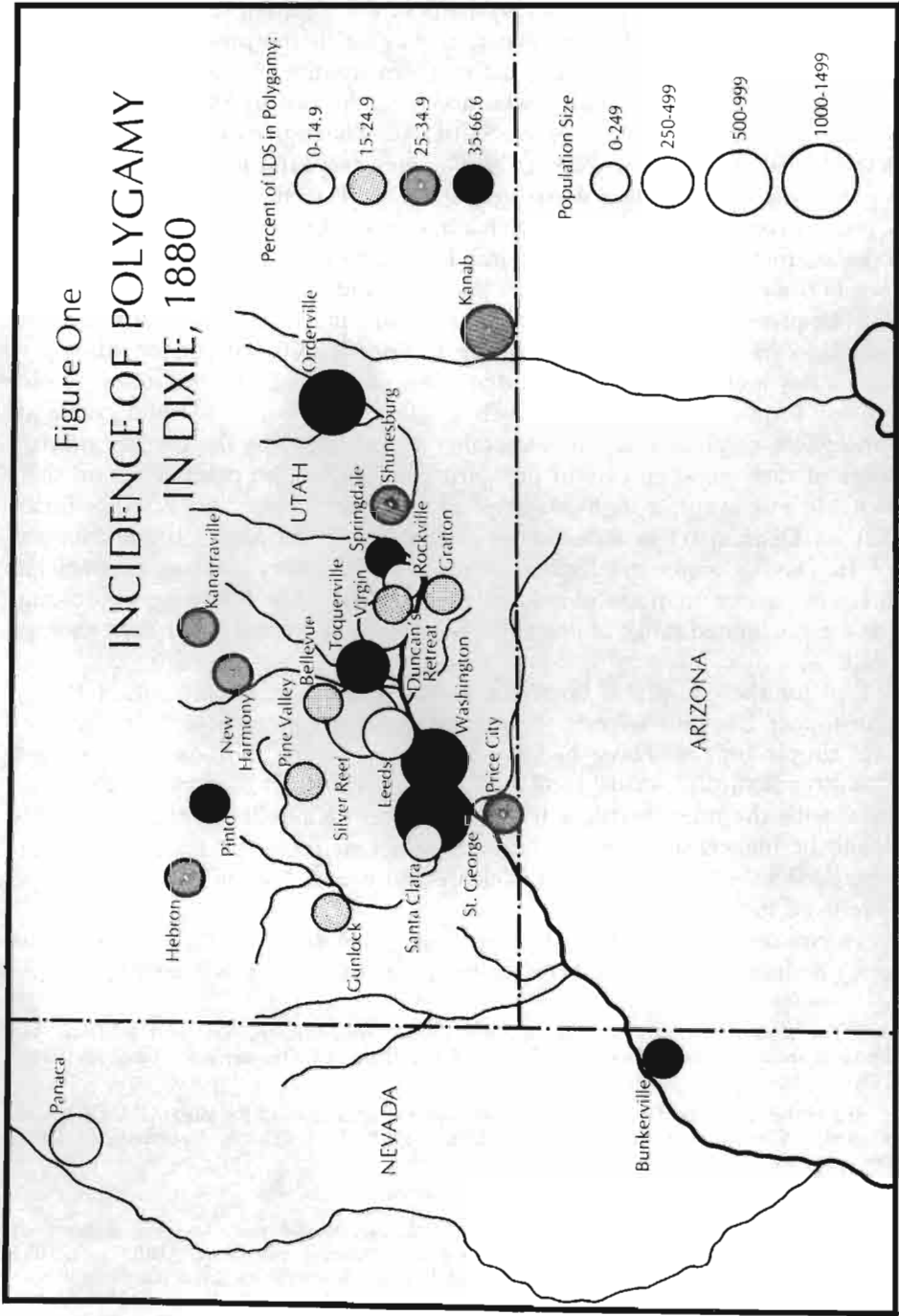
Overall, the percent of Dixie Saints forming plural families as of 1880 exceeded 30. At least that high a percent must have characterized Kanab Stake, the eastern half of Kane County, as well. Fully two-thirds of Orderville's population, the largest in the county, had become involved in the new order of plurality. Indeed, one suspects that membership in Mormondom's most successful attempt to establish the United Order may have required a commitment to plural matrimony. Unlike the pattern that usually prevailed in Mormon towns, many young men of Orderville entered the celestial order when they first married or soon thereafter. Kanab struggled with less success to maintain its communal economy, and less than half as many of its residents managed polygamous households.¹⁹ Quite a few of these frontier homes were

¹⁶ Myron Abbott, *Diary* (1880–1886), pp. 32 and 165 of typescript located in the Library of the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

¹⁷ I am indebted to Nancy Sessions Rohde, who just completed her master's degree in geography at the University of Utah, for drafting this map.

¹⁸ See Andrew Jenson's Dixie reports in the *Deseret News* of March/April 1882, which are also included in the "St. George Stake Manuscript History," LDS Church Archives.

¹⁹ The 30.4 percent figured for Kanab is somewhat higher than the 24 percent recorded for 1874 by Dean L. May, in "People on the Mormon Frontier: Kanab's Families of 1874," *Journal of Family History* 1 (Winter 1976), p. 172, illustrating once again change over time.



headed by a single plural wife whose husband and other spouse(s) lived elsewhere — quite likely in Arizona, where research reveals signs of several little “Ordervilles” dominated by polygamists.

Why did polygamy permeate so many of the southern settlements in Mormonism? The most likely explanation may lie in the process by which the church called settlers to colonize the southern frontier. Ideally one should see how many of the 245 families who accepted the call to Dixie in 1861 were already polygamous when they left Salt Lake. Suggestive of such a connection is the fact that a large majority of St. George’s polygamists in 1880 had added a plural wife prior to their departure for Dixie. It seems plausible at least that a proven commitment to plurality made one a prime candidate for a mission to southern Utah or Arizona. Church leaders had learned by 1860 that many members were as reluctant to move to the far south as to enter polygamy.²⁰

The presence of a nucleus of polygamists in a place at the start of settlement must have had a certain contagious effect. Friends and relatives, including perhaps a few more plural families, often followed the first settlers without receiving any formal call.²¹ Together such a collection of colonists could create an atmosphere conducive to the acceptance of polygamy as the marital norm.²² Some of their children caught the spirit of plurality and practiced it on their own. In any event, a high incidence of polygamy became yet another factor that set Dixie apart as a distinctive region within the Mormon culture area.

In Davis County the 1880 occurrence of polygamy displays a somewhat different pattern than the one described for Dixie. The following figures suggest a more limited range of percents (5–32) and an overall lower stake average (21.8).

Except for the one plural family in South Weber (headed by one of Bishop Christopher Layton’s wives), the percentages range from only 19 to 32, perhaps simply because Davis had fewer towns of larger and less variable sizes. The three Bountiful wards’ combined average was about the same as Farmington’s, with the other wards a few points lower. Kaysville’s percent probably should be higher, since the census-taker somehow missed at least two polygamists (Michael Clark and John Weinel) and two of Layton’s wives known to have lived there at the time.²³

According to one study, polygamists may have dominated the Woods Cross area (Bountiful South and West) even more than the 31–32 percent implies.

²⁰ For a vivid description of this attitude toward Iron County, just north of Dixie, see “Extracts from the Journal of John Steele,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 6 (January 1933), p. 25.

²¹ For the role played by family and friends in the settlement of Farmington, see Glen M. Leonard, “A History of Farmington, Utah, to 1890” (M.A. Thesis, University of Utah, 1966), pp. 29–31.

²² Foster, p. 331, uses a similar reasoning.

²³ Inez Barker, *John Weinel, Miller; Early Pioneer Builder and Operator of the First Flour Mill in Kaysville, Utah* (Kaysville: Prospector Printing and Design, 1983). In 1851 Brigham Young asked him to move from Salt Lake to Kaysville to build a grist mill and advised him to take a second wife. When neither wife bore him children, he added a third in 1860, but she, too, had no issue and left him after about six years. By then perhaps he realized he was the sterile one.

TABLE 4
PLURAL FAMILIES IN DAVIS STAKE, 1880

Ward	Total in Polygamy	Total LDS	Percent
Bountiful, East	199	908	21.9
South	135	432	31.3
West	99	309	32.0
Centerville	114	529	21.6
Farmington	287	1073	26.8
Kaysville	231	1408	16.4
South Hooper	63	325	19.4
South Weber	12	238	5.0

"Plural marriage was not 2% of the population in Woods Cross, it was 35% of the adult males."²⁴ The survey fails to specify a time or define "adult," but if the figure is valid, Woods Cross's plural families were well hidden even before leading Salt Lake polygamists sought at least temporary refuge there from the federal raids. At least three Salt Lakers — Horace S. Eldredge, John Pack, and Henry Tingey — had placed plural wives in Bountiful long before the raids. That would account in part for Bountiful's higher incidence (compared to Centerville's and Kaysville's) and even for Farmington's, where Apostle Franklin D. Richards located three of his wives. In Farmington's case, one-third of the polygamists had three or more wives, led by Bishop W. Hess with five.²⁵

South Weber's low percent must be a legacy of its association with the Morrisite movement which originated there in the early 1860s. Joseph Morris, father-in-law of a St. George polygamist (none other than Charles L. Walker), opposed plurality and made many converts among polygamous families. "Perhaps the issue of polygamy produced more converts to the Morris faction than any other factor, for a very large proportion of Morris's followers were recently arrived emigrants, especially from the Scandinavian countries."²⁶ Anderson's reasoning may be valid for the Morrisites, but large numbers of British converts in Davis county and Scandinavian immigrants in Box Elder, Cache, and Sanpete Counties entered polygamy with little, if any, hesitation. Given the early European tendency to equate Mormons with plural marriage, most converts — especially Scandinavians, who joined the church after the 1852 "confession" of the practice — must at least have heard rumors of polygamy before gathering to Zion.

²⁴ Arlene H. Eakle et al., *Woods Cross: Patterns and Profiles of a City* (Woods Cross: City Council, 1976), p. 12.

²⁵ Two Farmington residents, Glen and Karen Leonard, were interested and gracious enough to record the town's 1880 census for me. Should anyone else wish to ensure that my Utah sample will contain their town, they can perform a similar service simply by contacting me c/o the Geography Department, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California 95521.

²⁶ C. LeRoy Anderson, *For Christ Will Come Tomorrow: The Saga of the Morrisites* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1981), pp. 73-74.

Davis County's failure to match Dixie as a fertile field for polygamy may well reflect the different settlement histories of the two regions. Most Davis settlers neither needed nor received an official call to colonize an attractive area close to the headquarters of Mormondom. Church officials never sensed any need to station a resident apostle there, especially in the absence of any rail or mining center and any sizeable Gentile group. Possibly the absence of an Erastus Snow and the wholly voluntary nature of colonization in Davis County made enough difference to explain the lower number of polygamists there.²⁷

Elsewhere in northern Utah we have surveyed ten towns thus far and have found a slightly wider range and higher level of percentages than in Davis County. Three neighboring towns of Cache County typify the larger pattern: Benson (5 percent), Clarkston (28 percent) and Newton (40 percent). Benson's only plural family belonged to the second wife of Absalom Woolf in Hyde Park (one-third of whose population lived in the new order). Eventually, however, a Lorenzo Roundy moved his wives and children all the way from Dixie to Benson to raise the town's percent considerably. Clarkston's polygamous element, which included Martin Harris, Jr., also became larger in the 1880s when at least eight of its men joined the ranks of polygamists. Newton had a higher percent in 1880 but recorded no appreciable increase thereafter. Thus even this triad of adjoining towns mirrors the complex and changing incidence of polygamy described for Dixie and Davis.

This description of the patterns of polygamy practice in two very different parts of Utah reinforces the findings of my preliminary statewide survey. Davis and Dixie confirm the impression that plurality proved much more popular in some places than others. Moreover, the southern counties attracted or converted more polygamists than the central or northern ones. When combined, the Dixie-Davis averages indicate that more than one-fourth of their ten thousand Mormons observed the "Law of Celestial Marriage" as of June 1880.

If we accept the Arrington-Bitton assumption that "at the maximum less than one-fifth of the church population lived in polygamous families while the principle was in effect,"²⁸ then the Davis and St. George Stakes both ranked above the Mormon norm. But the percents figured thus far for towns elsewhere in the territory lead to the conclusion that Davis County was close to average, and thus that *at least* one-fifth of all Mormons lived in plural homes in 1880! Even if further research proves this tentative conclusion wrong, we still will have to account for the popularity of the plural form of marriage in numerous far-flung places such as Farmington, Toquerville, St. George, and Newton and for a higher percent in Dixie compared to that of Davis or other counties. At this stage of our project we can offer only a few impressions rather than full explanations.

Mormons who chose polygamy over monogamy — at least for a time — responded to constant encouragement from the pulpit. Frequent praise and defense of the plural principle by church leaders convinced many members —

²⁷ Presumably the reasons "Why Settlers Chose Farmington," as outlined by Leonard, pp. 27–31, apply to all of Davis County.

²⁸ Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), p. 185.

male and female — that they should try it. Charles L. Walker's diary refers to a number of sermons in St. George that "dwelt on the beauties of plural Marriage as ordained of God for the purpose of raising up a pure seed unto God."²⁹ Imagine what aspiring members thought when someone like "Pres George Q Cannon said He did not feel like holding up his hand to sustain anyone as a presiding officer over any portion of the people who had not entered into the Patriarchial order of Marriage."³⁰

Local leaders as well as general authorities often urged members to enter this new and holy order of marriage. Bishop William F. Rigby, for example, was not satisfied in 1878 with his ward's performance in this respect, even though Newton had "ten practicing polygamists . . . which was above par in the territory and commendable."³¹ Apparently further encouragement from him had little effect, implying that Newton's members had reached their plural limit. In Clarkston, however, someone's preaching must have had more impact, judging by the substantial increase there in the 1880s.

The best example I have found of a direct response to leaders' pleas for plural mating comes from a Norwegian convert who reached Sanpete County with his newlywed wife in 1862 and eventually made Ephraim his permanent home. Here is his account of how *they* gradually arrived at their decision to take a second wife in 1874:

A great deal of preaching and urging to obey the law of plural marriage by both local and visiting brethren, was being done by the priesthood. As we had had several young ladies staying with us and some hinting they would be pleased to live with us, we began to think that the Lord might be displeased with us if we did not embrace the opportunity which in so many ways was provided for us . . . We also realized the trials and trouble that would follow obedience. We had examples before us on every hand. We finally concluded it would not be right to shrink from the duty any longer. My wife conveyed the idea to a girl working for us by the name of Amalia Anderson.³²

Whether and how much "local and visiting" preaching for polygamy varied from one area to another would be difficult to determine. Dixie settlers may have heard more than their share of such sermons with a resident apostle in their midst, but Jedediah M. Grant launched the "Mormon Reformation" in Davis County before the settlement of St. George in a year (1856/57) when the number of plural marriages presumably peaked. Even if "Sporadic increases in the rate of plural marrying occurred during times of internal or external crisis,"³³ leaders continued to preach polygamy in less stressful years. Many a member must have responded in much the same deliberate way that

²⁹ Summary of a sermon by Apostle Erastus Snow, Nov. 3, 1883, in A. Karl Larson and Katharine M. Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 2:621.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:629.

³¹ Larry D. Christiansen, *A New Town in the Valley: The Centennial History of Newton, Utah, 1869-1969* (Logan, 1969), p. 36. The bishop's use of "practicing" seems a bit redundant.

³² "A Biographical Sketch of the Life of Oluf Christian Larsen Dictated by Himself and written by his son Oluf Larsen," 1916, p. 52 of Typescript in the Library-Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³³ Foster, p. 210.

Oluf C. Larsen did. By 1880 his first wife had passed away, making him a monogamist once again. About a year after his return from a mission to Scandinavia his bishop "told me I ought to marry either Anna or Hannah Larsen for he . . . positively knew I could get either one of them."³⁴ As usual, he heeded his leader's advice (opting for Hannah) and reentered polygamy. Charles L. Walker waited until three days after the opening of the St. George Temple in 1877, to claim his one and only plural wife, apparently inspired by that historic event.

Individual and community responses to the continuing urgings of "the brethren" probably varied even more than the intensity of the preaching in behalf of polygamy. Given the difficulty of probing motives, we should also investigate certain characteristics of polygamists vs. monogamists. For instance, were American-born Mormons more inclined than foreign-born to accept plurality? Or did length of time in the church (or in Utah) make any difference? About 40 percent of both the polygamists and the total population in St. George were foreign-born, suggesting that origins may have had little bearing upon predisposition to marry plurally.

Andrew Jensen thought that "St. George has [a] large[r] number of veterans . . . than any [other] part of [the] country."³⁵ Perhaps those who experienced Mormonism's several marches, not just the crossing of the plains, were also more willing to try polygamy. Since most veterans stemmed from the Mormon hearth in New England-New York, that region may have produced a disproportionate number of polygamists but certainly could not claim any monopoly.

Even the distribution and demographic structure of a town's polygamous element could affect its percent of the total population as of 1880. Quite often one sees in the census an older polygamist living at home with just two wives, all of the children having left. Veteran Joel Hills Johnson, for example, produced one of Dixie's largest families, but by 1880 he lived in Bellevue (above Leeds) with just one of his four wives and none of his numerous children. Nearly one-fourth of St. George's polygamists had at least one wife living elsewhere. Had they kept all of their wives and children in the same town, the incidence of polygamy within Dixie obviously would have differed considerably from the pattern mapped for 1880.

Whatever the reasons for the varying but relatively high overall levels of polygamy in the Davis and Dixie areas, I find reactions to the patterns almost as striking as the patterns themselves. Although Ivins' path-breaking study of plural marriage appeared almost thirty years ago,³⁶ most Mormons (even the many with polygamous ancestors) persist in believing that "plural marriage was never at any time a general law for the entire Church, and was never at any time practiced by over two percent of the male [and five percent of the

³⁴ "A Biographical Sketch," p. 64.

³⁵ *Deseret News*, March 21, 23, 1892.

³⁶ Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review*, 10 (Summer 1956): 229-39.

female?] population.”³⁷ Even members of the Mormon History Association seem surprised by the higher-than-expected percents revealed by recent research. Why have they also underestimated the extent of polygamy and at the same time minimized the importance of a practice which, as much as any other, set the Saints apart from the rest of nineteenth-century American society?

Perhaps an historiographer can best answer that question, but I cannot resist the temptation to speculate. First of all, except perhaps for the period 1852–82, the LDS Church has done its utmost to hide the phenomenon from public view. That fact and the nature of the source materials and the subject itself have made systematic study of polygamy difficult at best. In addition, most estimates have been based upon samples of prominent pioneers assumed to be the only ones able or allowed to experience plural matrimony. While such men may have formed a majority of polygamists, many of those listed in the 1880 census of Dixie and Davis do not appear in any of the biographic compilations of leading men. More than a few of them appear to have been men of limited means and average position.

By focusing on the men, most studies have overlooked the much larger number of women and children tied to them. Generally, of course, at least twice as many women as men were involved. The percentage of children in polygamous families falls in between the percents for male and female adults but closer to the latter. Plural wives may have been less fertile overall than monogamous ones (indeed, a barren wife occasionally motivated men to take a second), but they were numerous enough to produce a sizeable part of Utah’s “best crop.” Thus Alonzo H. Russell, Grafton’s only polygamist (7.7 percent of the married males), was responsible for 15.5 percent of the town’s population, not counting his three monogamous children and their families (another 14.1 percent). When one allows for the multiplier effect of a small male minority, the impact of polygamy on a population increases dramatically.

The failure to examine the plural world of Mormondom as closely as sources allow is easier to understand, if not excuse, than the tendency to downplay its place in the “Great Basin Kingdom.”³⁸ To my mind, the very reasons often given for the presumed low incidence of polygamy actually increase its significance. If the LDS as well as the total population of Utah did, in fact, have a more or less even ratio of males and females,³⁹ then there must have been definite limits to the number of men who could claim a second wife.⁴⁰ If the economic obstacles to polygamy and its added marital strains were as serious as usually portrayed, then committed Mormons should have been even more reluctant to try it than they supposedly were.

³⁷ William E. Berrett, *The Restored Church*, 15th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), p. 183.

³⁸ Besides the books by Foster and Arrington and Bitton already cited, compare Paul H. Peterson, “The Mormon Reformation,” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1981), p. 83, and David J. Whittaker, “Early Mormon Pamphleteering” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), pp. 366–67.

³⁹ Foster, p. 210.

⁴⁰ The ability of some men — about one-fourth of St. George’s polygamists — to attract and support more than two wives must have further restricted the number.

As we map the extent of polygamy for other parts of Mormon Country in 1880, new patterns may emerge. If we discover that Dixie and even Davis County had higher than average levels of plurality, we will still have to recognize that many other Utah wards, if not stakes, had equally high (or higher) percents of their populations practicing celestial marriage. By 1880, "Early Mormon Defenses" of polygamy had persuaded a significant minority of Saints to enter this patriarchal order.

That conclusion may seem bolder than the evidence presented in this essay (and the Provo paper) warrants. However, it seems justified by the fact that the percents calculated from incomplete data generally *underestimate* the extent of the practice. Moreover, the numerator leaves out those no longer living in a plural family by 1880 due to a death (except for widows still together), a divorce, or a monogamous marriage by many a polygamous child; and it also ignores those who entered polygamy *after* 1880. In addition, the denominator includes all of the motley lot of people gathered to Zion by the "gospel net" — even apostates and Gentiles who married Mormons. In short, a minimal numerator and a maximal denominator produce a percent that understates the position of polygamy in early Mormon life. A complete picture of polygamy's extent might force us to conclude that this form of marriage was nothing less than a "transformative experience" for the first two generations of Latter-day Saints.⁴¹

⁴¹ See Jan Shipps' provocative article on "Brigham Young and His Times: A Continuing Force in Mormonism," *Journal of the West* 23 (January 1984), p. 53, which hints at polygamy's significance in the making of Saints but fails to elaborate. Presumably her essay in this issue does just that.

Early Mormon Polygamy Defenses

By David J. Whittaker

Throughout the nineteenth century, Mormonism was on the defensive. Its claims to new revelation and its message of being the only church recognized by God assured a hostile reception wherever its missionaries traveled to preach. But of all the doctrines associated with early Mormonism, none aroused more animosity than the doctrine of plural marriage. So intense was the opposition to this doctrine that church leaders kept its practice secret for over ten years. Its existence was one of several factors that contributed to the death of Joseph Smith, as both insiders and outsiders reacted to a marriage system that ran so contrary to their cultural expectations.

Because of its concealed existence, defenses of the practice were seldom articulated. This fact helps to explain the aberrations of individuals like John C. Bennett and James J. Strang. It was not until the exodus that, at Winter Quarters, the doctrine was more publicly explained to members themselves. But it was 1852 before this unique marriage system was to be announced to the world.¹

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¹ See John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints: Or An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), pp. 217-57; Daniel Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith," (master's thesis, Purdue University, 1975), pp. 218-60; David Rich Lewis, "'For Life, the Resurrection, and the Life Everlasting': James J. Strang and Strangite Polygamy, 1849-1856," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 66 (Summer 1983): 274-91. See also Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 181-99; and Richard E. Bennett, "Mormons at the Missouri: A History of the Latter-day Saints at Winter Quarters and at Kanesville, 1846-1852, a Study in American Overland Trail Migration" (Ph.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1984), pp. 388-415.

The August 1852 special missionary conference was something of a watershed in Mormon history. Throughout its early history, Mormonism had been on the defensive, but at this conference Mormon leaders decided to take the offensive regarding plural marriage. Mormondom's most articulate spokesman, Orson Pratt, was asked to present to the conference the initial volley in this campaign. Pratt's discourse set both the tone and direction for later defenses of the doctrine. Briefly, he argued that its practice was the result of modern revelation, that it was protected by the American constitution, that it was part of God's eternal plan, and that the right to practice it was controlled by the one man who held the keys of this ordinance, the prophet and seer of God's kingdom on earth. Pratt further specified five reasons for the practice: it was the only way to fulfill the original commandment given to Adam and Eve to "multiply and replenish the earth"; it allowed individuals to fulfill and take part in the promises made to Abraham and his family; historically the earth's population has believed in polygamy, hence monogamy was the exception, not the rule; since monogamy is unnatural and invites immorality, the acceptance of plural marriage would reform the world morally and socially; and, finally, spirit children of God wait for a "noble parentage" who will train them up in righteousness.²

Following the conference Orson Pratt was sent by Brigham Young to Washington, D.C. to publish a periodical in defense of the doctrine he had publicly announced. In a real sense, his essays on "Celestial Marriage" in *The Seer* were lengthy expansions of the ideas only touched upon in his August 29 discourse.³ The proceedings of the 1852 conference were published two weeks later in a *Deseret News* "extra" and in other church periodicals in the months following. To publicly announce the doctrine was to invite more criticism from those hostile to Mormonism, but it also allowed Mormons for the first time to openly discuss and defend it. The public announcement and early defenses of the doctrine by Orson Pratt established the parameters for the larger public discussion of the practice within Mormondom. For those who were close to church headquarters, the pulpit would continue to be the forum for exhortation and the defense of plural marriage. For Mormon missionaries scattered throughout the world, many of whom left for their assignments following the special conference, something more was needed.

Between 1852, the time of its public announcement, and 1884, when the last major defenses appeared, about twenty pamphlets were authored by Mormon writers dealing directly with polygamy. It is the purpose of this essay to examine the defenses which began to appear after the 1852 announcement. Specifically this essay will show the influence of Orson Pratt, evaluate the Mormon uses of non-Mormon sources, and suggest the similarity of Mormon polyg-

² The speech itself can be found in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 1:53-66. The background to the public announcement, the special conference itself, and Orson Pratt's subsequent defenses of plural marriage are considered in detail in David J. Whittaker, "Orson Pratt and the Public Announcement of Plural Marriage" (forthcoming). Some of the material can also be found in Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1982), pp. 321-43.

³ *The Seer* 1 (January through December 1853).

amy defenses and Southern explanations of slavery. In all of this, both the historical context and the doctrinal apologetics will be emphasized.

PAMPHLETS BY BALLANTYNE AND HAVEN

Richard Ballantyne and Jesse Haven were among those who received mission calls at the August 1852 special conference. Ballantyne was monogamous until after his return from India; Haven left two wives when he departed from the Salt Lake Valley for South Africa.

Traveling first to Calcutta, Ballantyne was assigned to Madras, with Robert Skelton as a companion.⁴ The local press announced their arrival as the elders busied themselves with the publishing and distribution of various tracts. Anti-Mormon attacks soon forced them out of their hotel. During the first two weeks of August 1853 they continued to be pelted with anti-Mormon material in the local newspapers. Their responses at first were published, but as the subject matter turned more and more to polygamy, their replies were less and less acceptable to the editors. Charges of polygamy continued to be leveled against them. Ballantyne's letter to his wife described their situation:

the large bone that is being picked is polygamy. This is a large pill for many to swallow, and in fact the very first sight of it nauseates their stomachs, that at present they can scarcely receive anything else.

Again Ballantyne took up the pen to explain his religion to the public. He concluded on August 29 to write a piece for the newspaper and finished it two days later. But, as it turned out, the section on polygamy was not published.⁵

Polygamy was and remained a major stumbling block to Mormon missionary work in India. Twelve days after his arrival in India, Ballantyne recorded in his journal that he had commenced writing "an article on polygamy tracing its history from the Old Testament."⁶ These early days in Calcutta

⁴ The material on Richard Ballantyne is summarized from David J. Whittaker, "Richard Ballantyne and the Defense of Mormonism in India in the 1850s," *Task Papers in LDS History*, No. 23 (Salt Lake City: Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978). Two of Ballantyne's sisters had married John Taylor prior to 1852, one of the marriages later resulting in divorce.

⁵ Richard Ballantyne to his wife, Madras, September 6, 1856. Library-Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives). The experiences discussed are reported in his journal, August 28 to September 12, 1853, LDS Archives. The piece begun on August 30 was really a long editorial, or "an article for the Public, to remove if possible some reproach from this cause . . ." The whole essay was copied into his journal under the date of August 30, 1853 and occupies pp. 39, 42-67 of Vol. 3. From the date at the end, he finished it on August 31. At the top of p. 60 is a note: "This far the foregoing was published in the Madras 'Circulation' on Monday the 12th Sept. without comment — May the Lord bless the Editor." About three-fifths of the article was published, but interestingly enough it was the unpublished part which dealt with polygamy. Robert Skelton was listed as co-author, although the article was clearly the work of Ballantyne. For Skelton's positive judgment of the essay, see his September 1853 letter to Thomas Bullock, *Deseret News*, February 2, 1854. Six months later Ballantyne printed a tract on the subject, but his arguments had not changed significantly.

⁶ Ballantyne Journal, May 7, 1853. In his first two letters to his wife from India, Ballantyne told her of the problems the missionaries were encountering over this doctrine. On May 2 he told her of his giving a talk on the doctrine and on May 4 he mentioned that attacks were being made against the church for "sensuality." (Both letters are in LDS

taught him how very little he and his co-workers knew about the doctrine and practice of plural marriage, and as the attacks on the church tended more and more to center on this doctrine, every attempt was made to obtain further information on the subject.

Hugh Findlay, a missionary colleague in Bombay, reflected these needs and concerns when he wrote from Bombay to the mission president, N. V. Jones, in Calcutta. Celestial marriage, he said,

is, and has been from the first a point of continual discussion here — the corrupt hearts spicing forth their own abominable ideas concerning it. I sincerely desire to know the points of said law, as to be known among the Gentiles, and any tracts in your possession on the subject will be most acceptable indeed.⁷

These kinds of pleas help explain the growing presence of Orson Pratt's works in places like India. But, in addition to the Pratt material, other essays and pamphlets were potentially available to early missionaries needing ammunition with which to defend themselves. In February and March 1853 the *Latter Day Saint Millennial Star* (Liverpool) ran a series of "letters" on polygamy by John Jaques stressing the virtue of the Mormons and their marriage system and defending their leaders against attacks then being made.⁸ In the following months other items appeared, including a dialogue between "Nelly and Abby" (a defense of polygamy in the dialogue format which was becoming popular in the church in the 1850s), a defense written by a woman, and several articles which reprinted non-Mormon sources supporting the LDS position.⁹

Archives.) These experiences no doubt convinced him that a published defense would be necessary.

⁷ Hugh Findlay to N. V. Jones, Bombay, June 25, 1853. Original copied into Findlay's journal, LDS Archives. A convenient printing of this letter is Ross and Linnie Findlay, compilers, *Missionary Journals of Hugh Findlay, India-Scotland* (Ephraim, Utah: Privately printed, 1973), pp. 150–51. Findlay also copied into his journal several of the newspaper attacks: *Bombay Guardian*, April 16, 1852; *Bombay Gazette*, April 21, 1852; and the *Bombay Telegraph and Courier*, April 26 and May 6, 1852. All of these are in Findlay, *Missionary Journals*, pp. 7–19. Findlay's reply to the *Bombay Guardian* piece, denying as it did the doctrine and practice, surely placed him in a precarious position after the public announcement in August. His request of June 25 no doubt reveals the growing uncertainty of his public position. An examination of the anti-Mormon material copied into Findlay's journal reveals the influence of John C. Bennett's *History of the Saints*, as well as the tendency of non-Mormon Christian groups to rely on anti-Mormon material imported from England. See also the defense of polygamy by Truman Leonard, who was then laboring near Calcutta, against newspaper attacks on the doctrine in his *Diary and Letters, 1853–55*, typescript, pp. 74–82 (June 21, 1854), Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Leonard used material from Orson Spencer and Orson Pratt to shape his defense.

⁸ See John Jaques to J. G., *Millennial Star* 15 (February 12 and 26, 1853): 97–102, 133–36; and *ibid.* 15 (March 5 and 12, 1853): 145–49, 161–66. In the midst of this series Jaques was assigned to the editorial office of the *Star* and thereafter authored numerous items in the following issues. These letters were the source of his sixteen-page pamphlet *Polygamy*, probably printed in 1869. See also his poem "Celestial Marriage," *Millennial Star* 18 (April 12, 1856): 240. Also available was Orson Spencer's *Patriarchal Order, or Plurality of Wives!* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853). Spencer's death in October 1855 may have lessened the influence of this last piece as a separate work, although his *Letters* went into numerous editions.

⁹ See, for example, "Nelly and Abby — A familiar conversation between two cousins on Marriage," *Millennial Star* 15 (April 9 and 16, 1853): 225–29, 241–44. See also "Monog-

The missionaries in India (and elsewhere) in the 1850s soon began to draw on such sources. Richard Ballantyne's experience is a case in point. As noted above, he was attacked early in his mission because of this doctrine. In addition to the public challenges, his journal and correspondence reveal his personal questions, problems, and concerns. In May 1853 his wife had written him a letter, which he received in September, at the same time he was dealing with the public attacks. In addition to her expressions of loneliness, she expressed her personal concern with polygamy. His response on this occasion was the same as the counsel he gave her five months later when he wrote,

In regard to domestic relationships, and duties I would here *earnestly* recommend Brother O. Pratt's works as your constant guide. He has laid down 27 admirable, and comprehensive *rules*, in November and December Nos. of the *Seer*. You wrote to me that you intended taking the work, but if you have not, I would advise you to get it, and preserve it in the family.¹⁰

During this period Ballantyne was preparing to write the only pamphlet to be published by the Latter-day Saints in India which was devoted entirely to the subject of polygamy. His *Dialogue Between A. and B. on Polygamy* appeared in March 1854 and reflected the influence Orson Pratt was having in his life and especially on his thinking about polygamy. The pamphlet's dialogue format came from his reading of an unpublished anti-Mormon work, and at least four of its six pages reprinted non-Mormon proof-texts supporting polygamy which had been printed earlier in *The Seer* and the *Millennial Star*.¹¹ In addition to citing Martin Luther and John Milton, Ballantyne defends his church's position primarily with Old Testament quotations, supplemented by Orson Pratt's arguments from New Testament texts.¹² All of this "prepared" him to enter the practice when he returned home.

amy, Polygamy, and Christianity," *ibid.* 15 (August 6, 1853): 513–17. The first of these is representative of the dialogue-type writing which became very popular in the church in the 1850s, while the second is an example of the proof texting approach soon adopted by the defenders of polygamy, using as they did non-Mormon sources to prove their position. Further examples of this approach are considered below. Belinda Marden Pratt's *Defence of Polygamy, by a Lady of Utah, in a Letter to Her Sister in New Hampshire* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1854) will be discussed in detail later in this essay.

¹⁰ Although Mrs. Ballantyne's May 1853 letter is not extant, her husband's journal entry for September 26, 1853, the day he received her letter, makes plain what her concerns were. The quote is from Ballantyne to his wife, Madras, February 2–6, 1854, LDS Archives. The "rules" referred to are in *The Seer* 1 (November and December 1853): 174–76, 183–87.

¹¹ On December 3, 1853 Ballantyne recorded in his journal: "In the evening, I examined a manuscript, which Mr. Mills gave me, written by a Baptist, being a dialogue between the Minister and Member concerning the impropriety of admitting an unbaptised person or a Polygamist to what they call the Lords Table." The matter of admitting polygamous converts in India troubled most of the Christian churches proselytizing there. One extended Protestant scriptural defense of polygamy by Rev. D. O. Allen was quoted at length in Parley P. Pratt's *Scriptural Evidence in Support of Polygamy* (San Francisco: George Q. Cannon, 1856).

¹² The actual writing of the eight-page tract was done on March 8, 1854. On March 13 a printer's copy was prepared and, although an exact date is not known, it seems obvious that the pamphlet was out by the end of March. Its cost was borne by a Mr. Brown, the man from whom they were then renting rooms. In addition to the argument from the Old Testament, two lengthy quotations appear in the tract, one in the text and one as an appendix. The first was obtained from either Pratt or the *Millennial Star*, or both. This material first

Jesse Haven was not a man to take instruction lightly. He too was called at the 1852 conference, along with 159 others, to undertake missions to various parts of the world. He left Salt Lake City in September 1852 and would be gone until December 1856, spending most of his time in South Africa as the first president of that mission. Between the time Haven arrived in South Africa in April 1853 and his departure in December 1855, he was responsible for publishing eleven items—all but three of the church publications printed in South Africa before the mission was closed in 1865. As was the case with Richard Ballantyne, Haven's approach to missionary work was in good measure literary. His first two pamphlets were off the press just two months after his arrival; within four more months he had produced two additional tracts. Haven was influenced from the beginning of his mission by Orson Pratt and would, like Ballantyne, feel the need to defend the doctrine of plural marriage publicly.¹³

Once in South Africa, Haven and his companions advertised their presence in a local newspaper and set about visiting the local British officials in Cape Town. Within a week the action of mobs, spurred on by several anti-Mormon newspaper articles, threatened to halt their work. Their response, like that of their counterparts in India, was to turn to the written word. They distributed the tracts they had brought with them and also attempted to get replies printed in the local papers. When they ran out of the pamphlets they had brought with them and the local papers refused their articles, they turned to producing their own tracts. Haven had been responsible for writing for the newspapers, and when the newspapers refused their work, he then took the lead in expanding the rejected pieces into pamphlets.

His first published work was an attempt to provide the public with a concise listing of Mormon beliefs. This pamphlet listed thirty-three "articles" of belief, the longest expansion of the "original" thirteen in Mormon literature.¹⁴

appeared in "Christian Polygamy in the Sixteenth Century," *The Seer* 1 (December 1853): 177–83. Orson Pratt had written and issued the first seven numbers (January through June) by March 5, 1853. See Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, March 4, 1853, LDS Archives. The next two numbers (August and September) were being distributed in May 1853, just before Orson Pratt left for Liverpool, England. By the time he had returned to America in September, he had prepared the remaining three numbers, which were to deal with celestial marriage (October through December) and communicated such in a September 10 letter to Brigham Young (LDS Archives). The December issue had been published by the end of October 1853, as noted in Pratt's letter of November 4, 1853 to Brigham Young. It seems apparent that the article "Luther on Polygamy," which appeared in *Millennial Star* 15 (August 6, 1853): 526–27, probably came from Pratt's work, which finally appeared in longer form as "Christian Polygamy in the Sixteenth Century." Both pieces quote from J. B. Bossuet, *A History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* (1734; New York: John Doyle, 1842). The appendix of Ballantyne's pamphlet, entitled "Milton on Polygamy," appeared in longer form under the same title in *Millennial Star* 16 (May 27 and June 3, 1854): 321–24, 342–45; in *Deseret News*, August 10, 1854; and in *Zion's Watchman* 1 (January 15, 1855): 209–10, in exactly the same form as printed by Ballantyne.

¹³ Most of the material on Jesse Haven is summarized from David J. Whittaker, "'Anti-dote for Poison': A Study of Mormon Pamphleteering in the 1850s with Special Emphasis on South Africa, India, and Australia," (unpublished essay, 1976). See also Whittaker, "Early Mormon Imprints in South Africa," *BYU Studies* 20 (Summer 1980): 404–16.

¹⁴ Haven, *Some of the Principle Doctrines or Belief of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Cape Town: W. Foelscher, 1853). This work was produced May 18–19,

At the same time Haven was producing this pamphlet, he was also busy getting another one written and printed. This second work, *Celestial Marriage, and the Plurality of Wives!*, was printed by the same printer who had issued the first one. As was the case with the earlier tract, the missionary had tried to get a piece on plural marriage published in a local paper, failed, and then decided to print a separate tract on the subject. He wrote most of the material in May, examined the proof sheets between June 13 and 15, and received the finished copies by June 17. Orson Pratt's influence is obvious throughout. Haven had heard Pratt give the public announcement, had heard him speak on the doctrine while crossing the plains in his company, and had maintained a regular reading program involving Pratt's works.¹⁵

Haven came into the mission field as a polygamous husband and was a consistent defender of the doctrine and practice while laboring in South Africa.¹⁶ This fact makes for an interesting paradox in considering his defenses of polygamy. Haven's public stand in support of the doctrine never varied, but in his private life his own polygamous marriages were a constant source of concern. Several of his letters to his wives Martha and Abby reflecting such feelings were copied into his journals. The following extracts convey his concerns and attitudes. In March 1854 he wrote:

When I shall return home, I know not, neither should I care if it was in a cold country. But to this land I was sent, and here I expect to stay till I am told to leave, or till I die. When we were appointed on our mission, George A. Smith said "We are going to send you on a short mission not to exceed 7 years," so I expect if I live as long as that, I then shall be permitted to go home. If I die before that time, all right with me; and I presume better for you, for then you certainly will have the privilege of getting another husband; you have that privilege now if you wish or if you desire and I will say amen to it.¹⁷

Six months later he wrote:

What shall I write? Shall I talk about getting more wives? That won't suit you I know. I could however write volumes upon it, for it is an interesting theme to me. But I think I will not tell you all that is in my head on that subject; for fear you might be changing your names in a hurry, and in such haste, that you would break your necks. For your comfort however, I will just say, I have stuck no stakes yet. I still

1853. Haven examined the proof-sheets on June 7 and obtained copies of the finished work the next day.

¹⁵ Haven's journals for the period abound with references to his study of Pratt's work and to his support of the doctrine.

¹⁶ See his *Celestial Marriage, and the Plurality of Wives!* (Cape Town: W. Foelscher, 1853). Written between May and June 1853, this eight-page tract clearly shows Orson Pratt's influence (see especially pp. 5-8, citing *Journal of Discourses* 1:58-59). An examination of Haven's journal suggests that it appeared about June 17, 1853. See Journal A, LDS Archives, under dates of May 20, 26, and June 13-15, 18, and 20, 1853. Haven's pamphlet on plural marriage was available in India by October 1853, when N. V. Jones called it "a sound work" in his letter to Hugh Findlay, Calcutta, October 7, 1853, as cited in Findlay, *Missionary Journals*, pp. 164-65. There is no evidence that Haven's work circulated beyond Calcutta. Although some of the same arguments appear in N. V. Jones's *A Reply to "Mormonism Unveiled"* (Calcutta: Sanders, Cones and Co., 1853), pp. 88-105, it is unlikely that Haven's work was available in India until September or October 1853.

¹⁷ Letter dated March 20, 1854 in Journal B, LDS Archives. George A. Smith's comments are in *Millennial Star* 15 (Supplement, 1853): 3.

remember what br. Kimball said to Elders before I left. He told them, "Stick no stakes," I have tried to follow that counsel; but mark, he never told us that we should not select the ground where we could stick them.¹⁸

He did not learn until over a year after his departure from the Salt Lake Valley that his second wife had borne him a son. She named the baby Jesse, but Haven refused to be complimented by this honor. He wrote her a letter of rebuke in which he told her he would never forgive her for so cursing the child. Had he been there, he wrote, he would have named the child "Kolob"! ¹⁹

It should be obvious that probably neither Ballantyne nor Haven would have written about the subject of polygamy had not their missionary work demanded it; yet, in spite of the challenges the practice occasioned for the two men in their private lives, both defended the doctrine consistently and vigorously.

BENJAMIN F. JOHNSON: WHY THE "LATTER DAY SAINTS" PRACTICE A PLURALITY OF WIVES

Another early Mormon missionary who published a pamphlet on polygamy was Benjamin F. Johnson. While serving a mission in the Sandwich Islands in 1854, he was also forced to write a defense of his religious views regarding marriage. Johnson, who like Ballantyne and Haven had received his call at the August 1852 conference, had been privately counseled by Willard Richards prior to his departure that his mission "was to carry to the world the revelation on plural marriage, to advocate and defend it."²⁰

In April 1854 the largest newspaper in Hawaii, the *Polynesian*, published an attack on Mormonism, and more especially on Brigham Young, who was portrayed "as a seducer, adulterer, a fiend of lust, a man of all wickedness and corruption." The article also used biblical quotes "to prove all ancient polygamy reprobate to virtue." Deeply offended by these false charges, Johnson tried to get his co-workers to prepare a public reply, but both mission president Philip B. Lewis and fellow missionary George Q. Cannon refused to do so. Johnson then decided to write a reply himself. He later recalled.

I realized that if I was able to do anything according to my desire it must be through the inspiration of the spirit of God. I closed my door, and bowed weeping before the Lord, told Him our enemies were exulting over us through the falsehoods published against His servants and the Gospel we were sent to preach, and asked Him to make me able to vindicate the truth to His own glory. In this feeling, I poured out my soul in earnest prayer, dedicating myself to the guidance of His spirit. I then sat down with my pen, trembling under the great and new duty of writing for publication our defense; and so I wrote. If fear, doubt, or self-glory brought darkness I at once prayed for the light; and thus I continued for two days and nights to write and search the scriptures for the proofs needed in the reply.²¹

¹⁸ Letter dated August 12, 1854 in Journal B.

¹⁹ Haven, Journal B, December 22, 1853. It is possible that his mission allowed Haven to escape an unhappy home life and poverty and that his preaching and writing on plural marriage helped him both cope with and compensate for these problems.

²⁰ Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), pp. 140-41.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77.

Finding his finished essay approved by his co-workers, Johnson took it to the *Polynesian*, where it was refused. Another paper, the *Argus*, was approached, but the reply was too long for so small a paper. Johnson discussed the matter with friends, several of whom offered him money and suggested issuing the reply in pamphlet form. It was then decided to send the manuscript to San Francisco with Nathan Tanner, where it was printed at the Excelsior Printing Office sometime between May and June 1854. Johnson reported receiving 400 copies and remembered distributing them throughout the island, especially among non-Mormon leaders.²²

In pamphlet form, Johnson's reply numbered twenty-three pages of text. Orson Pratt's influence is apparent throughout the work. Johnson had received and read the first nine numbers of *The Seer* by November 1853, as noted in a letter to Pratt written during that month. In addition, Johnson specifically called attention to Pratt's articles on polygamy on the first page of his pamphlet.²³

Johnson had been introduced to plural marriage by Joseph Smith himself. Joseph discussed the doctrine with him and then requested that Benjamin ask his sister Almera if she would become the Prophet's plural wife. Shortly before his death in 1903, Johnson recalled other details about his early knowledge of the doctrine. He also recalled these early experiences in his autobiography:

In earliest childhood I was taught to believe in God and to venerate the scriptures as His divine word, in reading which, I saw that nearly all of the great men of whom and by whom the scriptures were written were polygamists; and that while by the law that God gave Israel through Moses, death was the penalty for adultery, yet Moses himself had a plurality of wives, and greatly was this practice honored by God; that through the polygamist families of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon and others, his Son, our Savior, was born to the earth. And while whoredom and adultery by the law of God were punished with death, yet in no place within the Bible is plural marriage reprov'd, or referred to with disrespect.

In 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught me that through no other medium than plural marriage could the great "Social Evil" of the present day be put away; and as the object and end of marriage was procreation through the command of God to multiply and replenish the earth, which became both in duty and privilege equal to all. And as human institutions now tend to deprive woman of marriage, and to degrade her through man's multiplied vices, God has given it by command that His servants who would keep the law of chastity should take the surplus daughters of the Church in plural marriage, and raise up children to honor Him; and in so doing they should inherit such wives and children to all eternity.²⁴

²² Ibid., pp. 177-79. See also the short note just inside the cover of Johnson's *Why the 'Latter Day Saints' Practice a Plurality of Wives . . .* (San Francisco: Excelsior Printing Office, 1854).

²³ The letter was dated November 18, 1853 and appears in *The Seer* 2 (April 1854): 247. Presumably Pratt later sent him the rest of the series as well. See Johnson's note on p. 3 of his tract.

²⁴ Johnson, *My Life's Review*, pp. 326-28. See also his statement dated March 4, 1870, in Andrew Johnson, *The Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 221-22 and his letter to George F. Gibbs, circa 1903, in Dean R. Zimmerman, ed., *I Knew the Prophets* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1976), especially pp. 37-48, 57. The larger picture is presented in E. Dale LeBaron, "Benjamin Franklin Johnson, Colonizer, Public Servant, and Church Leader" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966), pp. 76ff. Johnson took his first plural wife in November 1844.

No doubt these early experiences influenced Johnson's outlook on plural marriage. However, the content of his pamphlet, *Why the 'Latter Day Saints' Marry a Plurality of Wives. A Glance at Scripture and Reason, in Answer to an Attack through the Polynesian upon the Saints for Polygamy*, was clearly shaped by his reading of Orson Pratt's series in *The Seer*. The arguments are even presented in roughly the same order as in Pratt's series.

Johnson began with the *Polynesian's* attack on the alleged corruption of the Mormons, noting how inconsistent this was when a closer look was given to the "brothels" so evident in the larger community. Then he surveyed the practice of polygamy in the Bible, showing with the appropriate scriptural texts that a plurality of wives was "not only sanctioned and blessed by the Almighty, but that it was practiced by His commandment . . ." He specifically treated the cases of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, David, Solomon, Jchoiada, and Hosea to show that this marriage system was supported by the biblical text.²⁵ He also pointed out that Jesus chose to enter the world through a polygamous lineage and carried this line of thought to the same conclusion as Orson Pratt: not only did Jesus invite polygamous Jews to hear his message and join his movement, but he was a polygamist himself. He also reasoned that there must be a Heavenly Mother as a helpmeet for the eternal work of procreation — an argument that extended into the heavens the divinely established earthly pattern of extended families.²⁶

Johnson concluded by evaluating several specific comments that had appeared in the original attack. In each case, he continued to rely on material that had appeared earlier in *The Seer*, including such points as the "one flesh" interpretation of Genesis 3:24, which it was alleged could only apply to one man and one wife;²⁷ the plurality of husbands argument;²⁸ the "true" sphere and capacity of woman and her natural relationship with man;²⁹ the possibilities of love in an extended family relationship;³⁰ and the problem of there being men who could not find wives if polygamy were adopted as a marriage system.³¹ Johnson ended by inviting his readers to take note of the "bright star

²⁵ Johnson, *Why the 'Latter Day Saints' Practice a Plurality of Wives*, pp. 5ff. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 13, 62, 105–9, 139, 172–73.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 11, 13ff. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 80, 136, 158–60, 169–72. See also Linda Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven," *Sunstone* 5 (September–October 1980): 9–15.

²⁷ Johnson, *Why the 'Latter Day Saints' Practice a Plurality of Wives*, pp. 16–17. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 89–92, 154–55.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 17–18. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 60, 154–55. The argument against a plurality of husbands held that (1) it would frustrate the great design of marriage instituted by God; (2) since man is divinely appointed to be the head of the woman, if she had two husbands, she would have two masters; and (3) it would violate the nature of both men and women if a woman were to have more than one husband. Cf. Belinda Marden Pratt, *Defence of Polygamy*, pp. 5–6.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 18–19, 21. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 143–44, 155. This whole perspective, which was a natural outgrowth of the position that men are by nature polygamous, needs further analysis.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 19–20. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 138, 152ff.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 20–22. Cf. *The Seer*, pp. 198–99.

of Deseret" and repent, be baptized, and gather with the righteous out of the wretchedness of a wicked world.

BELINDA MARDEN PRATT, *Defence of Polygamy*

At first glance, it is curious that the most earthly defense of Mormon plural marriage was written by a woman. This is especially so in an age whose attitude toward women was dominated by the "cult of true womanhood."³² At the heart of this view was the assumption that "true" women were domestic, submissive, pure, and pious. Not only were women the protectors of virtue (they were not true women if they were unchaste), but they also epitomized the truly religious person — a model necessary to redeem their corrupt menfolk. Polygamy seemed to strike at the heart of both women's piety and purity; but for Mormons, polygamy was the essence of both: a "true" woman was a polygamous one. The published position of Belinda Pratt supports this conclusion.

Belinda Marden Pratt was born December 24, 1820 in Chichester, New Hampshire, the last of fourteen children, seven of them daughters.³³ Belinda married Benjamin Abbott Hilton in 1839 and, after several moves, the couple settled in Boston. She later recalled that although her husband was "infidel or unbelieving in most things pertaining to religion," she was seeking for a true church. During the winter of 1842–43 the Hiltons³⁴ attended a Mormon meeting in Roylston Hall in Boston which they had read about in a handbill advertising the meeting. They attended three meetings that day, during which Belinda received a spiritual witness that what was being preached was true. Even though her husband thought she was "too enthusiastic," they were baptized in the icy waters of Boston harbor about March 31, 1843.³⁵

Her new religion brought an end to her first marriage by 1844. To her husband's own apostasy was added her family's strong disapproval. But as her

³² See Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820–1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151–74. While there have been recent challenges to this interpretation, its general thrust fits the material covered here. Other valuable studies include Carl Degler, "Women's Sexuality in 19th-Century America," in Degler, *At Odds, Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 249–78; Ben Barker-Benfield, "The Spermatic Economy: A Nineteenth Century View of Sexuality," *Feminist Studies* 1 (1972): 45–74; Nancy F. Cott, "Passionlessness, An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790–1850," in Cott and Elizabeth H. Beck, eds., *A Heritage of Her Own, Toward a New Social History of American Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), pp. 162–81; and John S. Haller, Jr. and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977). Also valuable are Kathleen Marquis, "'Diamond Cut Diamond': Mormon Women and the Cult of Domesticity in the Nineteenth Century," *Papers in Women's Studies* (University of Michigan) 2 (1974): 105–24; and Klaus J. Hansen, "Mormon Sexuality and American Culture," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10 (Autumn 1976): 45–56.

³³ Most of the biographical information on Belinda Pratt comes from a seven-page autobiographical statement (to 1847) prepared by her and dated Salt Lake City, February 17, 1884. A copy was kindly supplied to me by Steve Pratt. This document was the basis for "Brief History of a Famous Woman," *Woman's Exponent* 38 (April 1910): 70–71, although most of the information on her plural marriage to Parley P. Pratt was removed. In addition, the *Exponent* article covers her life past 1847.

³⁴ The *Exponent* version reads "a friend," but the 1884 document specifically states that it was Belinda's husband.

³⁵ Pratt, Autobiographical account, p. 2.

husband's feelings toward Mormonism grew colder, she was drawn increasingly closer to her church. In the spring of 1844 she met Parley P. Pratt, Erastus Snow, and George J. Adams, and by June she had met other apostles who came east to campaign for Joseph Smith in his bid for the presidency of the United States. Acting on the advice of Lyman Wight that she move to Nauvoo, she left her husband and home in July. She arrived in Nauvoo about the end of September, working as a dressmaker as she journeyed west.³⁶

It was sometime after her arrival in Nauvoo that she was taught the doctrine of plural marriage, rumors of which she had previously heard but rejected. She was more fully taught the doctrine by Brigham Young and, after much prayer and soul-searching, accepted the practice as inspired. On or about November 20, 1844 she became a plural wife of Parley P. Pratt. Belinda then accompanied him on his Eastern states mission from December 1844 to August 1845, during which time she was often forced to live by herself in order to conceal their polygamous relationship. After returning to Nauvoo, she received her endowments and was again sealed to Pratt. On January 1, 1846 their first child, a son, was born. A month later they left Nauvoo with other Mormons who were being expelled from Illinois. By July they were encamped on the Missouri River near Council Bluffs, Iowa. In 1847 she made the final leg of the pioneer journey to the Great Basin.³⁷

Having lost contact with her own family, Belinda sought to re-establish it after she settled in Utah Territory. After her father's death in 1834, when she was fourteen, she had gone to live with her sister Lydia, who had married a minister named Kimball in Nashua, New Hampshire. Belinda had lived with them, while attending school, until her first marriage. When she was investigating Mormonism in 1843, she had written to all of her sisters about her intention of joining the movement, to which they responded that she had taken leave of her senses. Their relationship cooled thereafter, but her letters of 1847 were greeted with warmth and personal acceptance, provided she would leave the Mormons. She refused, but further correspondence followed, especially with her sister Lydia. Belinda Pratt's defense of polygamy grew out of this correspondence. Her eleven-page pamphlet was in fact a letter to Lydia dated Salt Lake City, January 12, 1854. Printed as *Defence of Polygamy, by a Lady of Utah, in a Letter to Her Sister in New Hampshire*, this work was a specific reply to Lydia's October 2, 1853 letter which Belinda had received on January 11, 1854.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 2-4, 6. Belinda writes that her husband, soon after his baptism, began to "doubt and feel ill towards the church and the brethren." She gives little detail on the divorce, except to say that she left him and that "my husband, Mr. Hilton, obtained a divorce from me by the false swearing of apostates." It was Lyman Wight who suggested that she go to Nauvoo and Brigham Young who requested that she get a letter of recommendation from the church authorities in Boston before traveling west.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 5-7. It is possible that Belinda first heard of polygamy in Boston, as there is evidence that George Adams, William Smith, and others were entering into such relationships there during this period. See Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, pp. 188-89. Brigham Young performed the plural marriage to Pratt in the Erastus Snow home.

³⁸ Pratt, *Defence of Polygamy*, p. 1.

The work itself contains many of the Old and New Testament arguments which Orson Pratt developed in *The Seer*.³⁹ The unique features of this defense are that it was authored by a woman, and that it argues from "natural law." Belinda presents her natural law argument as she advances the claim that the fulfillment of the great object of the marriage relation ("the multiplying of our species") requires that

a husband should remain apart from his wife at certain seasons, which, in the very constitution of the female are untimely. Or in other words, indulgence should not be merely for pleasure, or wanton desires, but mainly for the purpose of procreation. The morality of nature would teach a mother, that, during nature's process in the formation and growth of embryo man, her heart should be pure, her thoughts and affections chaste, her mind calm, her passions without excitement; while her body should be invigorated with every exercise conducive to health and vigor; but by no means subjected to anything calculated to disturb, irritate, weary, or exhaust any of its functions.

And while a kind husband should nourish, sustain, and comfort the wife of his bosom by every kindness and attention consistent with her situation, and with his most tender affection; still he should refrain from all those untimely associations which are forbidden in the great constitutional laws of female nature; which laws we see carried out in almost the entire animal economy. Human animals excepted.

Polygamy, then, as practiced under the Patriarchal law of God, tends directly to the chastity of women, and to sound health and morals in the constitutions of their offspring.

You can read, in the law of God, in your Bible, the times and circumstances under which a woman should remain apart from her husband, during which times she is considered unclean; and should her husband come to her bed under such circumstances, he should commit a gross sin both against the law of nature, and the wise provisions of God's law, as revealed in his word. In short, he would commit an abomination; he would sin both against his own body—against the body of his wife, and against the law of procreation, in which the health and morals of his offspring are directly concerned.

The polygamic law of God opens to all vigorous, healthy and virtuous females, a door by which they may become honorable wives of virtuous men, and mothers of faithful, virtuous, healthy, and vigorous children.⁴⁰

After a short discussion answering the question "Why not a plurality of husbands?"⁴¹ Belinda Pratt returned to her argument from nature:

I again repeat, that nature has constituted the female differently from the male; and for a different purpose.

³⁹ Cf. discussion of Old Testament material on pp. 2–3 with *The Seer*, pp. 13, 25, 62, 105–9; discussion of New Testament material on pp. 3–4 with *The Seer*, pp. 73–80, 89–96, 169–73; discussion of plurality of husbands on pp. 5–6 with *The Seer*, pp. 60, 154; discussion on patriarchal family order on p. 7 with *The Seer*, pp. 105–6, 138–41, 154–55; and discussion on the family of Abraham on p. 8 with *The Seer*, pp. 13, 172–73.

⁴⁰ Pratt, *Defence of Polygamy*, pp. 4–5. Benjamin F. Johnson came close to arguing the same position in *Why the 'Latter Day Saints' Practice a Plurality of Wives*, pp. 18–19. The argument for the prenatal influence of mother and child was quite common in nineteenth-century medicine. See Haller and Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality*, pp. 97ff. Orson Pratt had written about "the state of the parent's mind at the time of conception," *The Seer*, p. 155, and even Parley Pratt had earlier editorialized on the matter in the *Millennial Star*. See also the lecture of Albert Carrington, *Deseret News*, September 4, 1852 and the remarks of Brigham Young in Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 29, 1849, LDS Archives.

⁴¹ See note 28 above.

The strength of the female constitution is designed to flow in a stream of *life*, to nourish and sustain the embryo, to bring it forth, and to nurse it on her bosom.

When nature is not in operation within her in these particulars, and for these heavenly ends, it has wisely provided relief at regular periods, in order that her system may be kept pure, and healthy, without exhausting the fountain of life on the one hand, or drying up its river of life on the other; till mature age, and an approaching change of worlds would render it necessary for her to cease to be fruitful, and give her rest awhile, and enjoy a tranquil life in the midst of that family circle, endeared to her by so many ties, — which may be supposed at this period of her life to be approaching the vigor of manhood, and therefore able to comfort and sustain her.

Not so with man. He has no such draw back upon his strength. It is his to move in a wider sphere. If God shall count him worthy of an hundred fold in this life, of wives and children, and houses and lands and kindreds, he may even aspire to Patriarchal sovereignty, to empire; to be the prince or head of a tribe, or tribes; and like Abraham of old, be able to send forth for the defense of his country, hundreds and thousands of his own warriors, born in his own house.

A noble — man of God, who is full of the spirit of the Most High, and is counted worthy to converse with Jehovah, or with the Son of God; and to associate with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: one who will teach his children, and bring them up in the light of the unadulterated and eternal truth, is more worthy of a hundred wives and children, than the ignorant slave of passion, or of vice and folly is to have one wife and one child.

Indeed the God of Abraham is so much better pleased with one than with the other, that he would even take away the one talent, which is habitually abused, neglected, or put to an improper use, and give it to him who has ten talents.⁴²

Such an argument led Richard Burton, the nineteenth-century British explorer and student of the sexual customs of the world, to print Belinda Pratt's whole letter in his 1861 *The City of the Saints* with these introductory remarks:

Most readers, feminine and monogamic, will remark that the lady shows little heart, or natural affection; the severe calm of her judgment and reasoning faculties and the soundness of her physiology cannot be doubted.⁴³

Mormons reprinted her *Defence* not only because it provided an additional plausible explanation for their marriage system, but also because it was a strong statement of support by a woman in an age dominated by men. This was especially important as anti-Mormon attacks increasingly called attention to the plight of women in Mormondom in general and especially of those in polygamy.⁴⁴

⁴² Pratt, *Defence of Polygamy*, p. 6.

⁴³ Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California* (1861; reprinted New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 484–93; the quotation is from pp. 483–84.

⁴⁴ See Edward Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom* (New York: [Tullidge & Crandall], 1877), pp. 370–74. In reprinting extracts from *Defence of Polygamy*, Tullidge noted that in the work it “is strikingly made manifest the fact that the sisterhood accepted polygamy upon the examples of the Hebrew Bible . . .” (p. 370). On the treatment of polygamy by non-Mormons, especially the stereotypes found in anti-Mormon literature, see Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1954), pp. 1–28; Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, “Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature,” *Western Humanities Review* 22 (Summer 1968): 284–90; and Richard H. Cracroft, “Distorting Polygamy for Fun and Profit: Artemus Ward and Mark Twain Among the Mormons,” *BYU Studies* 14 (Winter 1974): 272–88.

In a letter to Belinda, Parley Pratt communicated his approval of her work:

Your letter is of world wide notoriety. It has appeared in a number of Newspapers, and finally in the *Millennial Star*. It convinces or shuts the mouths of all. It is one of the Little entering wedges of a worlds revolution. A Learned Doctor here [San Francisco], who is a great spiritualist, Borrowed one of the pamphlets, and begs to keep it as a great treasure. The Governors Br. here read it, and remarks that the whole foundation of society was wrong, and needed revolutionizing.⁴⁵

Belinda's *Defence* was first printed as a pamphlet, presumably issued in Salt Lake City by April 1854. Thereafter it was printed in the *Millennial Star* and *Zion's Watchman* (Sydney, Australia). Excerpts from it again appeared in the *Millennial Star*, while it provided the basis for an imagined conversation with a "polygamous female" in Jules Remy's *A Journey to Great Salt Lake City*.⁴⁶ If we include its appearance in Richard Burton's *The City of the Saints* (1861) and Edward Tullidge's *Women of Mormondom* (1877), it is clear that Belinda Pratt's pamphlet reached a wider audience in the nineteenth century than any other Mormon exposition on the subject, with the exception of Orson Pratt's works. She lived to see the Mormon defense of polygamy fall on the nation's deaf ears, dying February 19, 1894, just as Mormonism was beginning to abandon the practice she had so vigorously defended fifty years earlier.⁴⁷

ORSON SPENCER'S *Patriarchal Order, or Plurality of Wives!*

Orson Spencer, another early Mormon author, also issued a pamphlet defending the doctrine of plural marriage. While serving a mission in England in the late 1840s, he had written fourteen letters which, like those of the Pratt brothers, attempted to systematize the main doctrines of Mormonism for a non-Mormon audience. His epistles were directed to an old acquaintance, Reverend William Crowel, who had been the editor of *The Christian Watchman*, a Baptist publication issued in Boston. Spencer had known Crowel prior to converting to Mormonism and addressed his letters to him as a defense of his actions.

With the public announcement of plural marriage, Spencer had one more Mormon doctrine to explain to his old friend. Letter 15, entitled *Patriarchal Order, or Plurality of Wives!*, was sixteen pages in length and was dated Liverpool, England, January 13, 1853. It was issued before Spencer could have possibly read any of Orson Pratt's published material on the subject and thus is one of the few early pamphlets which stood on its own.

⁴⁵ Parley P. Pratt to his family, San Francisco, September 21, 1854. This letter was brought to my attention by Steve Pratt.

⁴⁶ *Millennial Star* 16 (July 29, 1854): 475-80; *Zion's Watchman* 1 (November 15, 1854): 171-80; *Millennial Star* 19 (October 31, 1857): 691; and Jules Remy, *A Journey to Great Salt Lake City* 2 vols. (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), 2:97-109.

⁴⁷ Belinda Pratt bore Parley five children. After his death she made her home for a time in the Fourteenth Ward, Salt Lake City. On July 10, 1858 she was married again (for time only) to Thomas Box. In 1870 she was living in Fillmore, Utah, where she served as both ward and stake Relief Society president. She returned to Salt Lake in the mid-1880s and died there.

Orson Spencer was born March 14, 1802 in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts.⁴⁸ Coming from puritan stock, he early manifested an interest in education. An illness when he was twelve left him with a semi-crippled leg, a physical handicap which seems to have further encouraged his quest for knowledge. In 1817 he entered the Lenox Town Academy. His progress there was so satisfactory that the local sheriff, Henry C. Brown, noting Orson's abilities and his parents' lack of finances, offered to loan him the necessary means to continue his education. He thus entered Union College at Schenectady, New York in 1819, graduated in 1824, and obtained a teaching position at an academy in Washington, Georgia the next year.

It was while Spencer lived in Georgia that he read law and also gained a more than casual interest in religion. He had returned home to Massachusetts by 1827, at which time he joined the Baptist church, a decision which forced him to choose theology over law in his continuing education. He soon entered the theological school at Hamilton, New York, from which he graduated in 1829. For the next twelve years he worked as a Baptist minister. In 1841 his brother Daniel brought him the message of Mormonism. Orson was baptized that spring, after which he moved to Nauvoo. He there served as an alderman and then moved west with the majority of Mormons in 1846. In 1847 he was called on a mission to England, a mission over which he presided until 1848. He also served as editor of the *Millennial Star* from February 1847 to August 1848, during which time he authored thirteen of his fifteen letters to the Reverend Crowel.

In 1849 Spencer was back in the Salt Lake Valley. The following year he was appointed chancellor of the University of Deseret and also served as a member of the legislature of Utah Territory. In 1852 he was called on another mission to Europe, this time to Prussia. His mission there was very short, as he was soon expelled by the government. He returned to Utah the next year, but was called on another mission, this time to the eastern United States, in 1854. He preached in the Cincinnati area until July 1855, when, at the request of Erastus Snow, he went to St. Louis to help edit the *St. Louis Luminary*. He arrived July 7, but, after a short stay there, was sent on a mission to the Cherokee Nation near Atchison, Kansas. In August he was preaching there. By September 5 he was taken ill and returned to St. Louis, where he died on October 15, 1855.

Orson Spencer's defense of plural marriage was thus written in the midst of a hectic life as a Mormon missionary. It is quite possible that his tract on plural marriage had its origin in a personal conversation with Reverend Crowel in St. Louis as Spencer was en route to Prussia. Crowel had moved from Boston to St. Louis, where by 1852 he was editing the *Western Watchman*. The first sentence of Spencer's pamphlet speaks of their "last interview" in November, in which Crowel asked him for a fuller explanation of the recently announced doctrine of polygamy. Spencer had attended the August conference and prob-

⁴⁸ Biographical information on Orson Spencer is from Aurelia S. Rogers, *Life Sketches of Orson Spencer* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1898); Seymour H. Spencer, *Life Summary of Orson Spencer* (Salt Lake City: Mercury Publishing Co., 1964); and Richard W. Sadler, "The Life of Orson Spencer" (master's thesis, University of Utah, 1965).

ably began to create the letter soon after their meeting, but did not finish it until he was in Liverpool, when he assigned a January 13, 1853 date to it. It was issued by the Mormon press in England soon thereafter and was translated into German the following year.⁴⁹

Spencer's letter is essentially a long sociological argument for plural marriage, presenting a detailed analysis of one of the five arguments which Orson Pratt had made in his August 29 address. Since monogamy is unnatural and invites immorality, the acceptance of polygamy would reform the world both morally and socially. Spencer began his essay by noting that "the spirit of the age justifies investigation into every subject that proposes to ameliorate the condition of the human family," and stated that of all the subjects one could examine, the "domestic compact" was the most important. Since the order of society requires the regulation of the relations of the sexes, and since God had clearly revealed what the true relationship should be, any other family arrangement was bound to lead to both disorder and disaster.⁵⁰ The balance of Spencer's pamphlet is an elaborate and lengthy proof that without the pure foundation of the patriarchal order, no society can survive.

Orson Spencer presented five propositions to prove his thesis: (1) the family order which God established with Abraham and Jacob is the order observed among beings in the celestial worlds; (2) progression in knowledge and increase in dominion, power, and happiness are inseparably connected with the multiplication of the human family; (3) patriarchal family ties are the essential ligaments and sinews of a righteous society; (4) in the area of marriage, all Christendom had broken the new and everlasting covenant made with Abraham; and (5) prostitution, gross debauchery, and licentiousness are the results of the breaking of the covenant of marriage as instituted by Abraham. Spencer's view was cosmic:

The grand design of God in bringing the spirits of men and women to occupy bodies upon this earth was, in order to establish a system of perfect Patriarchal government, according to the pattern of the family of Heaven.⁵¹

As in the justification that Orson Pratt was to develop in *The Seer*, Spencer offered an alternative to the family patterns which seemed to be failing in Jacksonian America.

MORMON USE OF NON-MORMON SOURCES

It should be obvious that few of the early Mormons would have written about polygamy had their missionary work not demanded it. There were other

⁴⁹ See G. C. Riser to S. W. Richards (who had published the pamphlet), Hamburg, April 29, 1854, in *Millennial Star* 16 (May 27, 1854): 333. The first printing in English was offered for sale in *ibid.* 15 (January 29, 1853): 75.

⁵⁰ Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, p. 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-14. The quotation is from p. 14. Spencer also argued that (1) Jesus was married; (2) the wicked will lose their families as a punishment for breaking the covenants; (3) while there are an equal number of males and females, males are generally more wicked, and thus the larger number of righteous females will be given to the fewer righteous males as a reward for obedience; and (4) the ancient Hebrews became a problem for the Egyptians because they grew so rapidly in numbers because of polygamy, but when the Egyptians sought to destroy them they failed, as "warfare against that order is warfare against God."

defenses of polygamy issued in early Mormonism beyond those discussed here, but none of them went beyond the arguments noted above.⁵² However, the Mormons were not the first people to defend polygamy in Western civilization, and so they peppered their publications with quotes from texts which seemed to support their system of marriage. Potentially there were numerous sources upon which they could draw, beginning as early as Plato. But Mormon defenses tended to draw upon the writings of two authors, Martin Luther and John Milton.⁵³

Luther was and continues to be a popular figure among the Mormons because of his key role in the Reformation. His stand against Catholicism was certainly useful in defending the Mormon position on the apostasy, but his biblical literalism was even more useful when it came to polygamy. When Philip of Hesse asked Luther in 1526 if he might follow the example of the biblical patriarchs and take a second wife, Luther's reply was cautious. He warned, "It is not enough for a Christian to appeal to the conduct of the patriarchs, he must also have a divine word for himself to make him certain, just as they had." But Luther's caution turned to approval when Henry VIII sought his opinion regarding the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. In 1539 Philip of Hesse reminded Luther of this support as the prince again sought permission to make official one of his amorous adventures, this time with a seventeen-year-old lover. Luther agreed, and along with several other Protestant ministers (some of whom would write their own defenses of polygamy), issued a written statement on December 10, 1539, giving consent. It was this statement which appeared in various LDS publications.⁵⁴

John Milton's defense of polygamy resulted from his attempts to get out of a bad marriage. His wife deserted him in 1642 and, after trying unsuccessfully for three years to get the divorce laws of England changed, Milton found polygamy an acceptable solution to his problem. In Book I, Chapter 10 of his *Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, he set forth his arguments for the practice, and, although the work was suppressed and then lost for over a century, it was this material which later appeared in numerous Mormon defenses of the doctrine.⁵⁵

⁵² Other early Mormon essays on polygamy include "A Reply to the 'Christian Herald' on the Plurality of Wives," *Zion's Watchman* 1 (November 12 and December 17, 1853; January 28 and March 4, 1854): 25-33, 50-52, 66-67, 76-85; "Polygamy," *The Mormon* 1 (February 17, 1855), reprinted in *Millennial Star* 17 (April 7, 1855): 212-14; Alexander Robbins, Jr., "Baptism and Plurality of Wives," reprinted from *The Mormon* in *Millennial Star* 17 (October 6 and 13, 1855): 635-39, 641-45; *Lecture of Reuben Miller* [February 11, 1877 in Mill Creek wardhouse on "Is Plural or Patriarchal Marriage sanctioned by the Almighty, and does Sacred History so Declare it?"] (N.p., n.d.); and John Taylor, *On Marriage. Succession in the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882).

⁵³ On Milton's defense of polygamy in Mormon literature, see note 12 above. Luther's defense of polygamy was first brought to the attention of the Mormons by Orson Pratt in *The Seer* 1 (December 1853): 178-81, where he cited J. B. Bossuet, *A History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*. Brigham Young quoted this same material in his June 18, 1865 address, *Journal of Discourses* 11:127.

⁵⁴ Leo Miller, *John Milton among the Polygamophiles* (New York: Loewenthal Press, 1974), pp. 13-23. The quote is on pp. 14-15.

⁵⁵ Miller, *John Milton*, pp. 3ff. See also Alan Rudrum, "Polygamy in *Paradise Lost*," *Essays in Criticism* 20 (January 1970): 18-23; Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English*

On many other points beyond polygamy, Luther and Milton seem strange bedfellows to the Mormons. Given the Mormon millennialistic position, it would seem that writers such as John Leyden, with his polygamous city of Münster, and John Leyser, who preached social salvation through polygamy, might have been more readily quoted. Early Mormons might have sensed by reading Leyser what the potential reaction of their neighbors to their marriage system would be. The following poem appeared in the 1675 printing of Leyser's *Political Discourse between Monogamo and Polygamo on Polygamy*, presumably contributed by a well-meaning friend.

You who are a minister
Of a doctrine sinister
Just continue with this tale
You'll be horsewhipped without fail.
If you ever choose to pass
Cities where our women mass
You had better duck this sentence.
Pass in prudence, slink in silence.
Don't you ever dare admit
That this booklet you have writ
Urging men to marry many
Or you'll be so shrewdly hit
You won't need to marry any.⁵⁶

The mention of these works suggests that Mormons who wrote on polygamy could have drawn upon a significant body of similar material. It is possible that Orson Spencer, one of the most highly schooled of the early Mormon writers, drew upon Martin Madan's *Treatise on Female Ruin* (1781, enlarged edition) for his 1853 *Patriarchal Order, or Plurality of Wives!*, and Madan was cited specifically in other Mormon defenses of polygamy. Madan saw polygamy as a social solution for the problem of "fallen women" in England, being one of the last in a long line of pro-polygamy writers in Western civilization prior to the Second Great Awakening. Thus, in hoping for a better world through plural marriage, the Mormons were not alone.⁵⁷

Revolution (New York: Viking Press, 1978), pp. 117-45; and John Cairncross, *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin; The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 126-36.

⁵⁶ Miller, *John Milton*, pp. 60-95. The poem appears on p. 70; presumably its appearance in Latin would have precluded its use by the Mormons!

⁵⁷ See Martin Madan, *Thelyphthora; or a Treatise on Female Ruin, in its Causes, Effects, Consequences, Prevention, and Remedy Considered on the Basis of Divine Law* (London: J. Dodsley, 1781), especially ch. 4 in vol. 1, "Of Polygamy," pp. 74-299. Cf. Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, pp. 7-8, 10, 16. Madan touched upon almost all the positions the Mormons later advocated. A copy of the 1781 edition of Madan was given to Brigham Young by S. W. Richards in January 1857. Madan's work probably reached Mormon authors through its appearance as an appendix to Rev. David O. Allen, *India, Ancient and Modern* (Boston: J. P. Jewett and Co., 1856). It appeared again in the lengthier edition of Parley P. Pratt's "Marriage and Morals in Utah" when it was issued in San Francisco by George Q. Cannon, along with the material from Allen, in *Scriptural Evidences in Support of Polygamy*, pp. 19-24. The Madan material appeared again as "A Protestant Minister's Arguments from the Bible in Favour of Polygamy," *Millennial Star* 19 (October 3, 1857): 636-40. George A. Smith included it in *The Rise, Progress and Travels of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Being a Series of Answers to Questions including the Revelation on Celestial Mar-*

POLYGAMY AND THE SLAVERY DEFENSES

There were many reasons why polygamy and slavery were identified in the nineteenth-century public mind as the "twin relics of barbarism."⁵⁸ One of the main ones was that both "peculiar institutions" were defended with similar arguments. In an unpublished essay,⁵⁹ Davis Bitton has suggested the following similarities between the Southern defenses of slavery and the Mormon defenses of polygamy: (1) both appealed to the idea of popular sovereignty;⁶⁰ (2) both slavery and polygamy were defended by biblical proof-texts;⁶¹ (3) both slavery and polygamy recognized and argued for a "natural place for blacks and women;⁶² and (4) both Southerners and Mormons argued that practical considerations justified their systems.⁶³ The similarities extend beyond

riage (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1869), pp. 48–55. See also "Patriarchal Marriage," *Ready Reference, A Compilation of Scriptural Texts, Arranged in Subjective Order, with Numerous Annotations from Eminent Writers, Designed Especially for the Use of Missionaries and Scripture Students* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1887), pp. 129–41; and E. N. Jencks, *The History and Philosophy of Marriage; or, Polygamy and Monogamy Compared, by a Christian Philanthropist* (Salt Lake City: Joseph H. Parry and Co., 3rd rev. enl. edition, 1885). The Madan material was first included in the second edition of this last work (1875) as an appendix. Wilford Woodruff thought it "an excellent work." See his journal, March 29, 1879, LDS Archives.

⁵⁸ This connection was officially made in the campaign platform of the newly organized Republican Party in 1856. The connection was reinforced by the parallels in the literature that attacked both institutions, pieces either written by those who "exposed" the evils of each or by those who had "escaped" either system to write an insider's story. See Richard D. Poll, "The Twin Relic; A Study of Mormon Polygamy and the Campaign by the Government of the United States for its Abolition, 1852–1890" (master's thesis, Texas Christian University, 1939); Arrington and Haupt, "Intolerable Zion"; and Charles A. Cannon, "The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign Against Mormon Polygamy," *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (February 1974): 61–82.

⁵⁹ Davis Bitton, "Polygamy Defended: A Study of Nineteenth Century Polemic" (unpublished essay, copy in my possession).

⁶⁰ Mormons sympathized with the Confederacy when the Civil War broke out in 1861. Brigham Young corresponded with Jefferson Davis and referred to Lincoln as "no friend to Christ." Lincoln signed the first anti-polygamy bill into law in 1862. See Brigham Young Office Journal, March 15, 1861, LDS Archives. During the nineteenth century, Mormons continually sought statehood for Utah in order to control their own affairs.

⁶¹ This has already been demonstrated with regard to the polygamy defenses; see also Brigham Young sermon, *Journal of Discourses* 2:187. For the Southern use of the Bible, see William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935), especially chs. 1–3. The implications of these religious arguments are discussed in I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense; Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900–1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), pp. 83–109. See also John C. Greene, "The American Debate on the Negro's Place in Nature, 1780–1815," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15 (June 1954): 384–96; and William McKee Evans, "From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odyssey of the 'Sons of Ham,'" *American Historical Review* 85 (February 1980): 15–43.

⁶² On the polygamy arguments, see note 29 above and specifically Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, p. 16 and Johnson, *Why the 'Latter Day Saints' Practice a Plurality of Wives*, p. 18. On the argument that blacks are slaves "by nature," see the material cited in note 61.

⁶³ As Bitton suggests, Southern apologists argued that the condition of the labor market, the type of labor to be performed, and the needs of the plantation system in the South made slavery necessary. For Mormons the evils of an apostate society which generated a surplus of women necessitated polygamy to prevent prostitution, infanticide, and the deterioration of family life. Both Southerners and Mormons came close to denouncing Northern capitalism as the basic cause of each section's "peculiar institution." For Southerners the "wage slavery"

these,⁶⁴ but the points mentioned are sufficient to fit the polygamy defenses into their nineteenth-century milieu.

CONCLUSION

To keep these works by Mormons in perspective, it is important to remember that only about 5 percent of all missionaries called between 1836 and 1884 wrote tracts and pamphlets of any sort defending their church, with only a handful of them being specifically devoted to the subject of plural marriage. Almost without exception, only Orson Pratt sought to go beyond a defensive position to one of explication. All other defenses appeared "in the heat of battle," as it were. This meant that, with few exceptions, the published material on polygamy stressed the doctrine and totally ignored the practice. This may help explain the normlessness which the Campbells have found in their study of divorce and polygamous marriage. It may also suggest that not only did most Mormons hesitate to enter into the practice, as Stanley Ivins suggests, but also that most Mormon writers hesitated to publish on the topic.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, a study of Mormon defenses of polygamy offers the historian another index of the ideological and millennial attitudes of early Mormons. An examination of these few pamphlets reveals the acceptance without doubt of a doctrinally-based practice seen as providing the basis for an alternative to a world order at the point of collapse. Although this new system of marriage would later be abandoned, the underlying hope for and commitment to a better world are still a central part of the Mormon message.

of the North was worse than slavery in the South; for Mormons, polygamy was far better than the evils of monogamy for both men and women.

⁶⁴ Those who wrote on these topics noted that both slavery and polygamy were practiced in isolated regions of the country, both were associated with more primitive and/or non-Western societies, and both posed the same constitutional problems for American lawmakers. As Bitton notes, both Mormons and Southerners eventually took refuge in apocalyptic solutions — the Southerners in a civil war; the Mormons in millennial expectations. For each group its peculiar institution became a lost cause, either denied or glorified in a later literature of justification. See the discussion in Bitton, "Polygamy Defended."

⁶⁵ Eugene E. Campbell and Bruce L. Campbell, "Divorce Among Mormon Polygamists: Extent and Explanations," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Winter 1978): 4-23; Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *ibid.*, 35 (Fall 1967): 309-21.

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The Principle Revoked: A Closer Look at the Demise of Plural Marriage

Jan Shippo

A fascinating peculiarity of Latter-day Saint historiography is the fact that, as scholars gained access to the surviving evidence documenting the nineteenth-century Mormon experience, interpretations of the introduction and practice of plural marriage in Mormonism were radically altered, while interpretations of the cessation of the practice remain virtually unchanged.¹ The LDS Church has always represented the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage" as a divinely revealed principle whose practice the Latter-day Saints espoused for religious reasons. For many years, however, the religious dimensions of plurality were practically ignored in scholarly studies of Mormonism. Employing natu-

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¹ Danel W. Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 19-32; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), Chapter 5.

Political treatment of the demise of plural marriage seems to have been strongly influenced by the account Brigham H. Roberts inserted in his multi-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Century I*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930). The latest and, by far, most complete account of the political dimensions of the end of polygamy is E. Leo Lyman, "The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 1981). See also Henry J. Wolfinger, "A Re-examination of the Woodruff Manifesto in the Light of Utah Constitutional History," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Fall, 1971): 328-349.

realistic explanation instead, scholars either described polygamy as an extension of the physical desires of Mormon leaders, most especially Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, or they pictured plural marriage as a pragmatic solution to problems that a supposed surplus of female converts posed to the LDS community.² Now the explanatory framework has shifted: the initiation among Mormons of the practice of "the Principle," as the Saints called it, is being ever more firmly set in the context of theology and its *modus operandi* comprehended in the context of religious practice.³ Yet when students of Mormonism describe LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff's decision to issue the Manifesto in 1890 and try to account for the discontinuation of ecclesiastically-sanctioned plural marriages that it announced, they persist in using the time-worn concepts of surrender and accommodation to general culture that observers have been using ever since the late nineteenth century.⁴

Danel Bachman's persuasive identification of Kirtland in the early 1830s as the place and time of the revelation to Joseph Smith about the propriety and, indeed, necessity of plurality in the LDS world has clarified the connection between the institution of this practice and the Prophet's initial vision of the divine order encompassed in the concept of the "restoration of all things."⁵ As a result, sensitive and knowledgeable historical discourse is not only now pointing to the presence of plural marriage in the early years of Mormonism, but making clear its centrality to the theo-social creation that rapidly took shape when, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing, Saints were first gathered out of the world to live within a Mormon universe wherein the religious and the secular — the sacred and the profane — were so inextricably intertwined that separating one from the other was simply out of the question. The connection between plurality and the "restoration of all things" underscores the importance of the *actuality* of polygamous marriages to the generative period in Mormon history. This, in turn, makes it possible to see that the fervor with which plural marriage was preached and practiced in the valleys

² For examples of such works, see William Alexander Linn, *The Story of the Mormons from the Date of Their Origin to the Year 1901* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1902); Ray B. West, Jr., *Kingdom of the Saints: The Story of Brigham Young and the Mormons* (New York: Viking Press, 1957); M. R. Werner, *Brigham Young* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1925); and Stanley P. Hirshson, *The Lion of the Lord: A Biography of Brigham Young* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969).

Twentieth-century Saints have sometimes used the surplus females argument to explain plural marriage, but in the early years of Utah Territory, as elsewhere on the frontier, men generally outnumbered women.

³ Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, Chapters 4 and 5 contain the most complete presentation of this new explanatory framework. See also, Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis"; and Phillip R. Kunz, "One Wife or Several? A Comparative Study of Late Nineteenth-Century Marriage in Utah," in Thomas G. Alexander, ed., *The Mormon People: Their Character and Traditions* (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, 1980), pp. 53–74.

⁴ For two recent general accounts of Mormon history that present versions of the surrender and accommodation interpretation, see James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), Chapter 13; and Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), Chapter 9.

⁵ Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis," pp. 26–32.

in the tops of the mountains took the Saints inside the biblical story, allowing experience to tie Old Testament accounts and everyday Restoration history together.⁶

Although there is little direct evidence to indicate that nineteenth-century Saints realized that they were engaged in living through the biblical story again in order to make it their own, Mormon diaries and autobiographies testify that something more than the promise of celestial glory animated the sustained efforts of a multiplicity of LDS men and women who struggled valiantly to make plural marriage work.⁷ They might not have known exactly how their marriage relationships were significant to Mormonism's success, but husbands and plural wives alike were convinced that they were actively engaged in "building up the kingdom." And, as a matter of fact, they were involved in kingdom building, both symbolically and literally. In openly living "the Principle," the Saints who were practicing plurality validated the claim that Latter-day Saints are descendants of Abraham by making that claim come alive in the culture. They were also building the kingdom by keeping secular society at arm's length long enough for Mormonism to establish itself. To a significant degree, moreover, plurality's practice gave Mormonism time to set its ecclesiastical house in order; time to get its history canonized; and time to draw enough inferences from the enormous body of revelation received during Joseph Smith's lifetime to develop a distinctive theology. Perhaps most important of all, because it allowed them to stay corporately "unspotted from the world" long enough for new generations of Saints to grow up knowing only what it meant to be Mormon, the practice of plural marriage gave the Latter-day Saints time to gain an ethnocultural identity that did not entirely rest on corporate peculiarity.

Intense social and political pressure from outside the community surely played a role in bringing the practice of plural marriage to an end. Yet other factors entered in. To be addressed here is the question of whether scholars need to develop an interpretation of the demise of Mormon plural marriage that will take into account its religious, as well as social, political, and economic dimensions.

Opposition to polygamy's being practiced among citizens of the United States started to develop in American culture as soon as Mormon plurality became public knowledge. Temporarily deflected by the Civil War and the beginnings of reconstruction, this opposition grew stronger in the 1870s and, as it did so, assumed an ever more explicitly political character. Then, during the next decade, opposition to polygamy increased and intensified to the point that it became virulent enough to threaten not only the survival of the practice of plural marriage, but the very life of institutional Mormonism. Yet as pres-

⁶ Jan Shipp, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), Chapter 3.

⁷ Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977) includes references to scores of diaries and autobiographies which contain such accounts. See also excerpts from the diaries of many polygamous wives included in Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, eds., *Women's Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1982).

sure from the surrounding culture mounted, LDS commitment to "the Principle" appeared to increase in direct proportion to its rising emotional and practical cost. As a result, an irresistible force seemed, by 1890, to be on a collision course with an immovable object.⁸ The apparently inevitable clash did not occur, however, because LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff became convinced, after a period of intense prayer and meditation, that the political and economic power arrayed against the Saints was so formidable that further efforts to uphold the practice of plural marriage would lead to the destruction of the LDS Church. So, in late September of that year, he acted for the church's "temporal salvation," issuing a public statement announcing that the church was no longer "teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice." Woodruff furthermore declared to the world that he intended to submit to the laws of the land that forbade plural marriage, and that his advice to the Latter-day Saints was to refrain from contracting such marriages.⁹ On October 6, 1890, this Manifesto was presented to the Saints in conference assembled and there it was accepted as "authoritative and binding." Headed "Official Declaration" and addressed "To Whom It May Concern," Woodruff's statement and the text of the motion to accept it, which the conference approved unanimously, were subsequently printed in the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the volume containing the canonized "revelations given to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, with some Additions by his Successors in the Presidency of the Church." This presumably turned Woodruff's "advice" into church doctrine.¹⁰

Chronologically, the Manifesto followed a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that anti-polygamy legislation was constitutional, despite First Amendment guarantees of the free exercise of religion. It came after the LDS Church was dissolved as a legal corporation and all its assets, other than \$50,000, forfeited to the United States. It was issued at the height of "the Raid," as federal marshals were "swarming" all over Utah Territory sending Saints who were practicing plural marriage "on the Underground," if they were fortunate, and sending them to jail, if they were not. And the Manifesto coincided with flagrant violations of Mormon civil rights and with the application of extremely heavy political and economic pressure designed to make it obvious to everyone, leaders and people, that as long as the Mormon Church continued to countenance plural marriage, Utah would remain a territory.¹¹ Since Woodruff acted

⁸ The classic account of this situation is in Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1971). See also Lyman, "The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," Chapter 1; Lyman, "The Woodruff Manifesto in the Context of Its Times," paper presented at an adjunct session of the Mormon History Association (San Francisco: December, 1978); and Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah* (Boston: C. M. Clark, 1911), pp. 23-65.

⁹ Woodruff's statement is printed as an "Official Declaration" following Section 136 in the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

¹⁰ The basis of the presumption that the "Manifesto" was (and is) church doctrine is the fact that it was read in LDS General Conference on October 6, 1890 and sustained unanimously by the Saints on that day.

¹¹ These events are summarized in many histories of the Saints. See especially Lyman, "The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood," and Wolfinger, "Re-examination of the Woodruff Manifesto."

at a time when the perceived level of animosity between the Saints and the larger culture had reached dizzying heights and when the government of the United States had made it absolutely clear that Mormon marital peculiarity was a price that would have to be paid for Utah statehood, historians have had a tendency to present the Manifesto as a melodramatic denouement wherein the President of the LDS Church, concluding that he had no other choice, acted quickly and decisively to bring the story of Mormon plurality to a rapid close.¹²

Recent research into the political negotiations carried on behind the scenes between the LDS authorities and the federal government, however, indicates that Mormon leaders had been considering alternatives and trying to decide what to do for nearly three years before the Manifesto was issued. If Henry J. Wolfinger and E. Leo Lyman are right — and they have located virtually irrefutable documentary evidence to support their position — Woodruff's declaration was not a sudden act of capitulation, but the conclusion of a process far less melodramatic than has often been suggested.¹³ Yet the research of these two outstanding scholars is not as revisionist as it might initially appear, for they continue to regard the matter as a contest between two institutions, the United States government and the Mormon Church. The issue to be decided was the issue of power, and if the church's surrender was not as sudden as has been thought, it was still a defeat for the institution.

In *Mormonism and the American Experience*, Klaus Hansen offers an alternative explanation with more explanatory power, challenging the conventional interpretation of the Manifesto as a response to political and economic pressure exerted from outside the LDS community.¹⁴ As he sees it, the success of Mormonism generated a conflict between the Mormon and the broader American cultures that played itself out in the struggle over the continued existence of the practice of plural marriage within the boundaries of the United States. Yet even as his interpretation clarifies the significance of the intergenerational contention that created opposition to polygamy within the LDS community, Hansen's explanation also rests, finally, on the distribution of power. In conflict with the larger culture, the Saints were bound to lose, and as is so often the case when cultures come into conflict, the winner takes all, since the price of defeat is accommodation to the victorious culture.

Given the enormous disparity that existed in the late nineteenth century between the influence and power wielded by Mormons and non-Mormons, with the advantage on the side of the latter, and given Mormonism's opponents' advantage of having the U.S. government act as their agent as it took

¹² Jan Shipps, "In the Presence of the Past: Continuity and Change in Twentieth-Century Mormonism," in Thomas G. Alexander and Jessie L. Embry, eds., *After 150 Years: The Latter-day Saints in Sesquicentennial Perspective* (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, 1983), pp. 12–14.

¹³ Wolfinger, "Re-examination of the Woodruff Manifesto," and Lyman, "The Woodruff Manifesto in the Context of Its Times."

¹⁴ Hansen, pp. 174–76. An earlier yet similar interpretation is Hansen's essay "Mormonism and American Culture: Some Tentative Hypotheses," in F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards, *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History* (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973), pp. 1–25.

steps designed to destroy the LDS marriage system, if not Mormonism itself, it is easy to see why the historical interpretation of the Manifesto as surrender has endured for so long. Moreover, given the perceptions that outsiders had of Mormonism as a rigidly hierarchical society in which LDS leaders were accorded "blind obedience," and in which church doctrine was accepted without question, it is likewise easy to see how non-Mormons then and historians since could have been led to believe that with the promulgation of the Manifesto and its subsequent addition to the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the church could have enforced the accommodation of Mormon marriage patterns to non-Mormon norms. Furthermore, whether the interpretation is the traditional political and economic one or the newer cultural conflict interpretation, it is obvious that whenever historians consider the demise of plural marriage practice from the lengthened perspective of the Saints and the nation, it will necessarily follow that this is one episode in the Mormon past that will have to be pictured as an occasion when, instead of acting, the Saints were "acted upon."

If the focus is narrowed, however, so that the end of Mormon marital plurality is considered within the context of the Mormon community itself, the Manifesto — whatever the explanation of its promulgation — and the cessation of the practice of plural marriage appear in a different light. For one thing, an examination of the situation from the standpoint of those who were actually involved in the practice of plural marriage reveals that, just as the leaders of the church in Salt Lake City and the governmental officials who were dealing with the matter in Washington, D.C., were not surprised when President Woodruff issued the Manifesto, neither was his announcement a sudden and entirely unanticipated event *within* the LDS community. In addition, a realistic assessment of the way in which authority is exercised in Mormonism makes it clear that, even had it so desired, "the church" would have been unable to force immediate compliance with an order that plural marriage had to disappear abruptly and completely from the lives of the Latter-day Saints. Finally, such an approach allows a description of a variety of ways in which the members of the Mormon community responded to the necessity for bringing a practice they regarded as divinely mandated to an end.

Although Latter-day Saint Eugena Washburn remembered that "we were greatly astonished" when the Manifesto was issued, and although similar expressions of surprise can be found in the writings of others, it is still a mistake to conclude that the Mormons capitulated on the issue of plural marriage either suddenly or unexpectedly.¹⁵ Woodruff's public announcement was issued on September 24, 1890, but quiet restrictions had been placed on the practice of plural marriage in the early part of that year. These restrictions possibly came even before the Liberals (the "Gentile" party) won the 1890 Salt Lake City elections that were held in February and surely before the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decisions in cases involving the confiscation of LDS

¹⁵ Lorena Eugenia Washburn Larson, *Autobiography*, typescript in the collection of the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City.

church property and the Idaho Test Oath; and also before the Cullom-Struble bill was introduced into Congress.¹⁶

Circumstantial and direct evidence indicates together that these restrictions were not kept secret, at least from the Saints who might be described as part of the LDS "inner circle." In fact, enough was known about the church's policy of no longer officially solemnizing plural marriages or openly encouraging them to make the Manifesto such old news that the editors of the *Woman's Exponent*, who presumably ought to have been vitally interested, as they were all polygamous wives, ignored the story until it was published as a part of a report of October 1890 General Conference activities.¹⁷ More directly, Sarah Smith, a plural wife of Woodruff's counselor, Joseph F. Smith, received a letter from her husband that he had written on the day the "pronuncimento" was announced reminding her that while the Manifesto would "no doubt startle some folks," it would not startle her as she would understand what was going on. And one more example: Martha Cragun Cox, who lived far away from the center of Mormon culture in southern Utah, had been warned by her bishop "months before" President Woodruff spoke officially to the press "that plural marriage was to be discontinued."¹⁸

In the great majority of the many survey treatments of Mormon and Utah history, the Manifesto is invested with so much importance that it is pictured as the agent of the demise of polygamy. Aside from the fact that the discontinuation of the practice had started before the Manifesto was formulated, there is ample evidence to indicate that the reality of bringing plural marriage to an end was much more complicated and that it took such a long time that the Manifesto of 1890 was superseded by other manifestos before the process reached the stage in which the LDS Church can be said to have truly abandoned plural marriage.

First, assuming a cause and effect connection between the issuing of the Manifesto and the actual cessation of plural marriage requires an interpretation that pictures Woodruff's statement as a statement of policy. As its content shows, it was not that. The declaration started with a description of marital affairs in Zion in September, 1890, which said that official sanction for plural marriages had already been suspended. It continued with a statement of the church president's own intention to submit to the laws of the land that forbade Saints to live "the Principle," plus his prescriptive advice to the Saints to do likewise. But it did not include two items that could have turned the Manifesto into a policy statement that would have been recognized as such by the Saints: there was no "thou shalt not, thus saith the Lord" at the beginning or

¹⁶ Lyman, "The Woodruff Manifesto in the Context of Its Times."

¹⁷ The first announcement was carried in the *Woman's Exponent*, October 15, 1890. It was little more than a matter-of-fact account of what went on during the October 6 conference session when the Saints were asked to sustain the Manifesto.

¹⁸ This letter from Joseph F. Smith to Sarah Smith is in the Special Collections at the University of Utah.

For the warning to Martha Cragun Cox, see "Biographical Sketch of Martha Cragun Cox, 1852-1932," typescript, p. 201, Library-Archives of the LDS Church, Salt Lake City, Utah.

the end, and the statement did not clarify the status of existing plural marriages. Consequently, the precise meaning of the Manifesto was ambiguous in the extreme, creating a situation marked by confusion and uncertainty.

In ordinary circumstances, such confusion would have been cleared away through time-worn LDS counseling procedures that make directions and information available to the Saints from the top of the hierarchical structure down through the ranks. In this instance, however, the normal administrative process that is designed to see that Saints "follow their file leaders" foundered on deep divisions over the issue of whether the practice of plural marriage should be given up, a division that fragmented the LDS hierarchy from the lowest to the very highest levels.¹⁹ As a result, instead of clarification, the Saints received mixed messages from their leaders. This was such a difficult problem that, in 1904, President Joseph F. Smith (who had succeeded to the position of president of the church in 1902) issued a "second manifesto" which had unmistakable "thus saith the Lord" overtones. And yet even that was not enough, and the ambiguity remained until 1905, when the church established its position with enough firmness to make it stick by dismissing two apostles from the Council of the Twelve and disfellowshipping them from the church for continuing to marry into plurality themselves and for encouraging others to do so.

Even in situations in which apostles, stake presidents, and bishops supported the discontinuation of the practice of plural marriage and made strenuous efforts to see that President Woodruff's advice was strictly followed, the matter was not as clear-cut as outsiders appear to have thought. The hierarchical and authoritarian character of institutionalized Mormonism, which led so many observers to believe that the leaders of the church could compel the Saints to do their bidding, was then (and is now) balanced by the LDS doctrine of "free agency." Since this doctrine holds that when "the Messiah" came to redeem humanity from the fall of Adam, individuals became "free forever," knowing good from evil and being thenceforth able "to act for themselves and not be acted upon," the Latter-day Saints occupied positions of quasi-independence, poised between the necessity for obeying counsel and following their own consciences which, in the 1890s, were consciences that had been formed in a world wherein plurality had been celebrated as a *sine qua non*. Without it Mormonism could not merit its privileged place in the divine scheme of things.²⁰ It is no wonder, then, that the Saints' response to the Manifesto and to directions to give up plural marriage was not as unanimous as their vote in conference might suggest.

Not surprisingly, relief was probably the most common initial reaction to Woodruff's statement, even among wives fully committed to "the Principle." In her autobiographical sketch, the same Sister Cox who was warned about

¹⁹ Kenneth L. Cannon II, "After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy, 1890-1906," *Sunstone* 8 (January-April, 1983), pp. 27-35.

²⁰ "Agency" entry in Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), pp. 25-27.

the impending abandonment of plurality noted, for instance, that "the issuing of the Manifesto had caused a cessation of strife."²¹ During an oral history interview, Edith Smith Patrick remembered that it had relieved her parents of "all this persecution — or most of it."²² In her account of her life, the articulate Annie Clark Tanner, whose birthday fell on September 24, remarked the happy coincidence that the declaration came almost as a present:

I can remember so well the relief I felt when I first realized that the Church had decided to abandon its position. For all my earlier convictions, a great relief came over me. At that moment I compared my feelings of relief with the experience one has when first crack of dawn comes after a night of careful vigilance over a sick patient.²³

And, in *Little Gold Pieces*, Juliaetta Bateman Jensen's story of her mother's life, the daughter recalled that her mother "said nothing, as usual, but she looked her satisfaction. What a sense of relief," Jensen continued, "must have come over her when the Manifesto was passed. There would be no more exile and night raids with their attendant anxieties. The future surely would be brighter."²⁴

Brighter? Perhaps so, but for most polygamous wives, not immediately. Actually, the Manifesto raised more questions than it answered. It had been presented to the Saints in General Conference and there accepted as "authoritative and binding." What did that imply? President Woodruff spoke about obeying the laws of the land: did that mean that new polygamous marriages could be solemnized where the laws of the land did not run — in Canada or on the high seas? Of more significance to those who were already polygamous wives in 1890, Woodruff's emphasis on no new plural marriages left the status of existing ones in limbo: were the covenants that bound partners in existing plural marriage relationships still valid? If not, was the institutional church willing to stand on the Manifesto as inspired? What, then, would the theological implications be?

Answers to these questions and many others all had to be worked out in an extremely tense political climate. For that reason, the LDS ecclesiastical leadership temporized, drew fine semantic distinctions, and sent mixed messages by giving different answers to different people on the one hand and saying one thing and doing the opposite, on the other. Tacit approval was given to some persons to have plural marriages performed outside the United States; others were reminded that polygamous practice had been suspended. Some polygamists were maintained in positions of responsibility while others were abruptly released. Clarifying the intent of the Manifesto in Chancery Court, President Woodruff had to say that the discontinuation of plural marriage

²¹ Cox, typescript, p. 201.

²² Interview conducted by Leonard C. Grover, July, 1980. Filed in the oral history collection in the Charles Redd Center for Western History, Brigham Young University.

²³ Annie Clark Tanner, *A Mormon Mother: An Autobiography by Annie Clark Tanner* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Library, 1969), p. 130.

²⁴ Juliaetta Bateman Jensen, *Little Gold Pieces: The Story of My Mormon Mother's Life* (Salt Lake City: Stanway Printing Co., 1948), p. 130.

meant exactly that, including no continued cohabitation between plural marriage partners.²⁵ But at the very same time and for a long time afterward, many members of the Quorum of the Twelve produced offspring by multiple wives.²⁶ Confusion reigned supreme, and in its midst several response patterns developed within which polygamists dealt with the Manifesto and each of these patterns had important consequences for polygamists.

One of these responses was welcoming the Manifesto's message and using it to effect a fundamental change in life style. When this response was adopted by polygamous husbands, it had a direct impact on wives who were more or less left to their own devices, not by choice but by the circumstance that their husbands refused to support them, either emotionally or financially, any longer. Essentially the same response also could be adopted by a polygamous wife, as *A Mormon Mother* documents. Tired of running, hiding, struggling to maintain herself and her children, and playing second fiddle to her husband's first wife, Annie Clark Tanner used the Manifesto's message and her husband's refusal to accept it as justification for ending the relationship and going on alone to build a life for herself and her children.²⁷

A response at the other end of the spectrum was adopted by "that class of people," in the words of Emmeline B. Wells, "who failed to see the Lord's hand," either in the Manifesto or in its acceptance as authoritative and binding.²⁸ All their efforts were directed to maintaining the practice of plural marriage, going, if necessary, to live in Mexico or Canada, and, in effect continuing to give all for "the Principle" as they had done in the 1880s. Accounts of their efforts are heartrending revelations of the cost demanded from plural wives. For a flavor of same, note the words of Nancy Clement Williams:

If ever Gethsemane was lived it was lived thro in my almost 4 years [in the 1890s] on that Dublin flat — 6 miles from town — not a telephone ½ the time and no teams around. Drunken Mexicans coming when I was alone with small children. One son getting his arm broken in two places; one daughter born and died. A beloved sister from Diaz dead. [Truly she lived] in a strange land among strangers. Only 5 teams to the funeral; no friends to mourn with us. No one to speak of her [sister's] good qualities as they had known her in life."²⁹

The story of Henry Eyring's plural families in Mexico that is recounted by Jessie Embry indicates that things were not always this bad.³⁰ New support

²⁵ Several fine accounts of the immediate aftermath of the Manifesto are in print. In addition to the article by Kenneth L. Cannon II cited above, see Lyman, "The Quest for Utah Statehood," Chapter 5, and Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood*, Chapter 13. The account of Woodruff's statement in Chancery Court and his commentary on it are found in the journal of Abraham H. Cannon, November 12, 1891, LDS Church Archives.

²⁶ Kenneth L. Cannon II, "Beyond the Manifesto: Polygamous Cohabitation among LDS General Authorities after 1890," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Winter 1978): 24–37.

²⁷ Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, pp. 141–336.

²⁸ Wells Diaries, 1890 Book, entry for September 29, 1890, LDS Church Archives.

²⁹ Reminiscence and journal, printed in Godfrey, et al., eds., *Women's Voices*, pp. 368–69.

³⁰ Jessie L. Embry, "‘To Lie for the Lord:’ The Effects of the LDS Church's Policy on Polygamy after 1890 on the Edward Christian Eyring Family," paper read at the Oral History Association annual meeting, October, 1980, Durango, Colorado.

systems for plurality sometimes developed outside the United States. But one needs only to read Sam Taylor's *Family Kingdom* or *Rocky Mountain Empire* to grasp how difficult life was for those who adopted the response pattern based on rejection of the Manifesto.³¹ For the plural families of John W. Taylor, Matthias F. Cowley and a host of others life was demanding and strange in the face of the dissolution of the elaborate and intricate network of practical and emotional maintenance that sustained plural marriage in nineteenth-century Utah.

These two responses represented radically opposite attitudes to "the world," the one accepting the standards and values of the larger culture and the other rejecting those standards and values out of hand. Yet a third response pattern — one that might be called acceptance — allowed Saints to move into the larger culture while maintaining their peculiarity by staying individually unspotted from the world. As interesting as are the often tragic stories of the Annie Clark Tanners who found in the Manifesto an excuse to move away from the patriarchal order of marriage and the equally tragic accounts of the Martha Cragun Coxes and the wives of John W. Taylor who used rejection of the Manifesto as a means to enter into it more fully, this acceptance of the Manifesto was far more popular, and understanding it is far more crucial if comprehension of modern Mormonism is the aim.

In the fourteen years between the first Manifesto's publication and the promulgation of the so-called Second Manifesto in 1904, the lack of precision as to meaning allowed the Saints to work through the cessation of the practice of plural marriage in a manner that added strength to the Mormon movement. Practically, compliance with the injunction against new polygamous marriages was required, but — although it seemed for a while that all existed relationships could be maintained in name only with the husband providing financial assistance without enjoying connubial rights — time, distance from the lime-light, and extreme discretion allowed those who had entered plurality before 1890 to live out their lives in it.

If all this sounds easy, it was not. Taking this course, adopting this response pattern, called for a delicate balance between accommodation to the world and rejection of it. Plural marriage, actual, literal, living plural marriage had, as indicated earlier, been absolutely central to the Mormonism of nineteenth-century Utah. Now its centrality had to be relinquished without undoing the synthesis of scriptural story and modern experience that made Mormonism live and flourish — and that could only be done if the Saints could be convinced that it was necessary.

A good way to look at what happened is to start not with plurality's demise, but with its introduction into the community during Joseph Smith's lifetime, for that was not easy either. Even the prophet Joseph Smith needed revelatory reassurance to convince him that he was not about to commit adultery. Brigham Young wanted, at first, to die rather than to give his assent to the correct-

³¹ Samuel W. Taylor, *Family Kingdom* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951); *Rocky Mountain Empire: The Latter-day Saints Today* (New York: Macmillan, 1978). These two books are written by the son of John W. Taylor. Both contain poignant accounts of the life of his mother, as well as the lives of her children.

ness of the practice. Orson Pratt was distraught, sent almost to the point of madness. And so on. Obviously its introduction was a trial, a testing, that called on the Saints to exchange the comfortableness of American culture for life "in the Kingdom." It was a trial and a testing surmounted by a process not unlike conversion, as one individual after another moved over into polygamous practices. This process of conversion did not end in Nauvoo, but continued in the valleys of the mountains as innumerable diaries and journals attest.³²

Now the process had to be reversed and Saints had to be converted away from polygamy. It did not happen collectively, but the process of being converted away from the principle clearly figured as the means by which plurality was given up. Juliaetta Jensen "more than once" heard her father say that when he went to Conference in October, 1890, he went with "some of his friends who had suffered exile and imprisonment and had determined to vote against the Manifesto." "But," said Jensen's father, "some power not my own raised my arm, and I voted to sustain President Woodruff in this matter. As soon as I had done it a sense of peace and contentment came over me."³³ Helen Mar Whitney wrote in the *Woman's Exponent* of "the late Declaration of President Woodruff which was sustained by Conference without an opposing vote." "When I perused the minutes," she said, "I did so with a prayerful heart and desire for the right spirit . . . and the testimony and spirit that came to me was strong enough to convince me that this step was right."³⁴ Zina D. Huntington Young said, "Today the hearts of all were tried, but [we] evoked to God and submitted."³⁵ For, as Emmeline B. Wells said, "we must wait and see what the Lord has in store for us — we do not always know what is for our best good here and hereafter."³⁶

The effect of seeing the demise of plurality in this context does not call into question the idea that the Manifesto and the end of the practice represented surrender and accommodation in some ultimate practical sense. But it does call into question the notion that things changed overnight and that the community gave up the practice primarily because they were "acted upon" by the federal government and the pressures of the larger culture. The responses of the community suggest, rather, that the practice played a crucial role in the development of Mormonism, and that outside pressure was merely the catalyst not the primary cause of this important change that moved Mormonism out of the pioneer period into the modern age in a form that allowed it to grow and prosper.

Plural marriage was introduced to the Saints who, ever so slowly, converted to it in the early years, and the Saints gave it up in a comparably slow process that often involved "conversion" away from the practice. With remarkable

³² Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, Chapters 4 and 5.

³³ Jensen, p. 130.

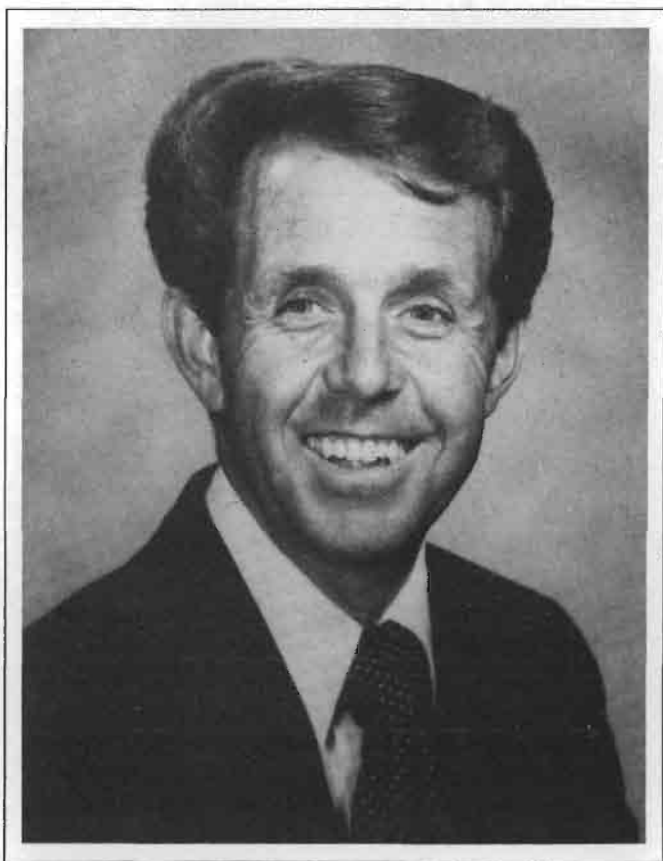
³⁴ Whitney, "The Opinion of an American Woman Whose Forefathers Fought for the Liberty That We Are Denied Today," *Woman's Exponent*, November 15, 1890.

³⁵ Zina D. Huntington, Journal entry for October 6, 1890.

³⁶ Wells, Diaries, entry for September 29, 1890.

symmetry, life was given to the practice and taken away from it.³⁷ This suggests that the practice was not a failed experiment; neither was it a frustrated religious activity whose continuation is required of those who would experience the fulness of the LDS gospel. When it had served its purpose, plural marriage was slowly but nevertheless firmly subtracted from the panoply of doctrines and practices that combined in the nineteenth century to turn ordinary people into Latter-day Saints.

³⁷ It is interesting to note that the Wells diary cited above reports the presence of speaking in tongues and interpretation thereof among polygamous wives at this time of great trial. See entries for March 15, 1890 and October 3, 1890. A similar manifestation of spiritual gifts is noted in a selection from the journal of Ruth May Fox reprinted in *Women's Voices*, p. 377. Reports of such phenomena are likewise reported in the selection from the diary of Patty Bartlett Sessions, also reprinted in *Women's Voices*, pp. 186, 187, 190, 191, 192, 194. Spiritual gifts among Mormon women obviously accompanied the process of conversion to plural marriage and, then, conversion away from this distinctive LDS marital practice. While reports of such gifts of the spirit are not restricted to these confusing and troublesome times, the presence of speaking and interpretation of tongues during the introduction and demise of plural marriage strongly supports the argument that the practice was religious to the core.



Kenneth W. Godfrey
President of the Mormon History Association
1983

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Nauvoo Neighborhood: A Little Philadelphia or a Unique City Set Upon a Hill?

By Kenneth W. Godfrey

On February 12th of this year [1984] Americans commemorated the 175th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Lincoln authorities at that time told us that over 5,000 books have been written about that Civil War president.¹ Nearly fifty years ago James G. Randall, author of the four-volume *Lincoln the President*, wrote a famous essay in *The American Historical Review* titled, "Has the Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?" in which he argued that it had. Yet since the Randall essay was penned, hundreds of valuable books about Lincoln have appeared, including those by Carl Sandburg, Stephen Oates, and Mark E. Neely, Jr.²

In 1966 I submitted a dissertation proposal to my doctoral committee that included a prospectus dealing with the causes of Mormon/non-Mormon conflict in Hancock County, Illinois during the years 1839-46. After having done extensive research and completing the first chapter, I was summoned into the office of the graduate chairman and told in a most solemn, serious manner that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had turned down my proposal. When I, equally solemn and serious, while at the same time beginning to feel very sick inside, asked what reason or reasons had been given for the rejection, I was told that Cecil McGavin and B. H. Roberts had told the story of Nauvoo and that

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¹ Herbert Mitgang, "After 175 Years They Still Pursue Lincoln," *New York Times Book Review*, February 12, 1984, p. 26.

² *Ibid.*

there was nothing left to be written. Having just become aware that the LDS Church's historical archives had 3,000 Nauvoo letters in what they then referred to as their unclassified letter file, the contents of which no one seemed to know, I was not convinced then, nor am I today, that the full story of Nauvoo has been told. It was only after letters had been sent to Joseph Fielding Smith, who was absent when the first decision was made, Hugh B. Brown, and Paul H. Dunn, with considerable help from William E. Berrett, that I was allowed to continue my Hancock County studies. Since that time we have all read significant revisionary articles regarding the "Kingdom on the Mississippi" by Michael Quinn, Marvin Hill, Andrew Ehat, Lyndon Cook, and James B. Allen, to name only a few, while we anxiously await the sesquicentennial volume of history dealing with the church's stay in Illinois by Glen Leonard.³

A recent bibliographical search disclosed that over 450 books about Joseph Smith, including his sojourn in Nauvoo, are housed in the Church Historical Department Library, while an additional 120 books, articles, dissertations, and theses have been published regarding the Nauvoo period alone. Yet most serious students are left with the feeling there is still Nauvoo gold left to be mined and that somehow we have not as yet fully understood the "City Beautiful" and its charismatic leader.

In this paper the writer will focus on the Nauvoo neighborhood and what life was like among the common folk as some of the "structures of everyday life" are examined.⁴

It is highly probable that if the researcher were to ask a Mormon what nineteenth-century American city had three-quarters of its taxable property valued at over \$50, while at the same time at least a third of its inhabitants were ill housed, ill clothed, and ill nourished, or was in the process of establishing libraries, promoting the arts, improving health and sanitation, had citizens devoting themselves to cultural and philosophical matters, had many craftsmen banded together in associations, was operating under a liberal city charter, had leaders preaching and supporting temperance, while at the same time many of the citizens were looking forward with anticipation to the second coming of Christ, the answer probably would be Nauvoo or Salt Lake City. However the above description is that given by James McGregor Burns in his book *The Vineyard of Liberty* as he characterizes Philadelphia just before 1800.⁵

³ D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1845," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 163-97; Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *ibid.* 20 (Spring 1980): 253-80; Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Lyndon W. Cook, "'Brother Joseph Is Truly a Wonderful Man, He Is All We Could Wish a Prophet to Be': Pre-1844 Letters of William Law," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 207-9.

⁴ In his *The Structures of Everyday Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) Fernand Braudel, one of the world's leading historians, has just completed a monumental work regarding the social history of people during the Middle Ages. Such studies are now very fashionable.

⁵ James MacGregor Burns, *The Vineyard of Liberty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), pp. 116-17.

It would appear then that in many respects life among the common people of Nauvoo was more like that in other American communities than it was different. In fact, Peter Gay in his new study of life during what we call the Victorian Era tells us that hundreds of small towns were "exploding into sprawling, thriving, miserable bustling urban agglomerations."⁶ Thus while Nauvoo too was experiencing great growth because of the Mormon concept of the gathering, it was neither unique nor unusual, if Gay's findings are correct, that such growth would occur at the time that it did. But let us now turn our attention to some other aspects of life in Nauvoo featuring the ordinary people.

HOW NAUVOO'S PEOPLE MADE A LIVING

By means of a thorough search of newspapers, diaries, journals, and the *History of the Church*, the writer has been able to identify over 200 different occupations among the citizenry of Nauvoo. With the help of Mervin Hogan and James Kimball, it was determined that of 1,348 Masonic Lodge applicants in Nauvoo, at least 38 percent considered themselves to be farmers, while just under 10 percent listed their occupation as carpenters.⁷ Moreover, there were comparatively large numbers of stone masons, shoemakers, laborers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, and stone cutters. In fact, if all of the construction-related occupations were added together, almost 35 percent of Nauvoo's men were engaged in such endeavors. Thus over two-thirds of the male citizenry were either farmers or what would be known today as blue collar workers.

Some of the more colorful and unusual Nauvoo occupations might include river boat captain (of which there were at least four), gatherer of rags, soap works manager, portrait painter, seller of palm leaf hats, seller of brass clocks, seller of alum salt, carrier of water to the store for use in the endowments, broadsword teacher, spy, fisherman, trapper, coal miner, matchmaker, dentist, seller of chestnut trees, comb seller, and purveyor of mercury to kill bedbugs. (Bedbugs were prevalent enough that the *Nauvoo Neighbor* frequently ran articles that gave instructions on how to get rid of them. The Saints were to put a small quantity of mercury into a tumbler, break into the mercury the white of two eggs, mix together, and apply with a feather. This mixture was guaranteed to remain for years and sooner or later the bedbug would encounter it and would not "endure it in an instant."⁸) Continuing, other occupations included auctioneer, tavern owner (of which there were at least four), coffin maker, seller of garden seeds, elderberry salesman, cheese merchant, and seller of facsimiles of the Kinderhook plates, which represents perhaps the second attempt to make money from Mormon memorabilia. (Of course the Egyptian mummies were probably the first.)⁹

⁶ Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud*, vol. 1: *Education of the Senses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 50.

⁷ These figures are from a study of Nauvoo's Masonic lodge applicants, compiled by Mervin B. Hogan, and were shared with the author by James L. Kimball, Jr.

⁸ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 2, 1845.

⁹ The author has compiled a list of occupations from advertisements in the *Wasp*, the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, the Masonic list compiled by Hogan, and the diaries of Nauvoo's citizens.

James Kimball has shown that 35 percent of the Nauvoo Masonic applicants were between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine, almost 40 percent between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine, while almost 20 percent were between the ages of forty and forty-nine, and only 6 percent were fifty or over, suggesting something about the age of Nauvoo's work force. My own studies have shown that at least fifty percent of the time a person in his early twenties was likely to be found working on the temple or in the stone quarry or on a farm. Those men in their thirties were more likely to be found on the police force or as bodyguards or engaged in founding their own businesses. Women in Nauvoo often taught school, cultivated gardens, or did sewing to supplement the family income.¹⁰ These men and women who made up Nauvoo's work force often had unusual names which sometimes bore a striking resemblance to their occupations. For example, James Twist was a cordwainer, while William Winterbottom was a cotton spinner, Forrester Harwood made cabinets, while Martin Littlewood laid bricks, at the same time that Burr Frost cut wood. It would have been nice if John Fido had trained dogs, while Joseph Outhouse made "johns" at the same time Joseph DeForest cut down trees as the people watched James Rodeback train horses, but they did not in fact have such trades that so closely resembled their names. Not a few people in Nauvoo banded together and purchased community lots which they would then farm, sharing the produce. In this manner the poor were at least able to keep from starving.¹¹

It is important to note that almost all of Nauvoo's working force were engaged in more than one occupation. It appears that in order to make a living, the Saints had to do many things. However, it should be noted that this was typical for other Americans as well. According to James E. Davis, it was not until the 1860s that people generally had only one occupation at a time.¹² Before that decade many, if not most, Americans were jacks-of-all-trades.

It should perhaps be mentioned also that Nauvoo had its more wealthy residents, such as William Law, who owned mills, land, and other businesses. The city had at least ten doctors, at least six lawyers, more than eight score school teachers, while other Mormons made their living publishing books, newspapers, and pamphlets, managing drugstores and other domestic dry goods stores or manufacturing furniture, carriages or weapons. Thus the city also had its share of those considered to be white collar workers.

Strikingly, the occupations of Nauvoo's citizenry ran almost parallel, both as to percentages and varieties, to those listed and discussed by James E. Davis in his book *Frontier America*.¹³ Even his section titled "Defending the Garden," as well as the one which discusses newspapers, sounds very much like he had studied Nauvoo.¹⁴

¹⁰ This information was compiled from over a hundred diaries which date from the Nauvoo period.

¹¹ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, January 1, 1845.

¹² James E. Davis, *Frontier America, 1800-1840: A Comparative Demographic Analysis of the Settlement Process* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1977), pp. 151-54.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 144.

It became apparent then from a study of Nauvoo's occupations that a goodly number of its citizenry were willing to do almost anything to make a living. While Nauvoo had its poor and those who struggled against poverty, the percentage of those engaged in blue collar occupations was probably no higher than in other American communities.

NAUVOO'S ECONOMIC ASSOCIATIONS

As was true in other growing American municipalities, Nauvoo's citizens often banded together according to occupations so as to set prices, establish standards of quality, and to police their particular vocation. Research has been able to establish the existence of at least eighteen such associations. This list includes the well known Nauvoo House Association, with George Miller serving as its president, which sold hay, oats, wheat, corn, potatoes, wood, pork, beef, and houses. The lesser known Botanic Association, founded to collect herbs and roots for the good of the Saints, was presided over by John Young. George Harris was president of the Nauvoo Coach and Carriage Manufacturing Association and business was so good that Hosea Stout tells us that the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles appointed a committee from their own members to regulate the regulators. Some of Nauvoo's women organized to promote home industry and manufacturing. The Twelve appointed three sisters to superintend this association, which began March 13, 1845 and was first organized in the Evans Ward only six miles from Nauvoo. The school teachers of Nauvoo organized an association on August 30, 1843, to insure uniformity of standards, textbooks, and curriculum. The famous Nauvoo Agriculture and Manufacturing Association operated under charter to build a dam across the Mississippi. The dam was to consist of three piers forty feet long, ten feet wide, fifteen feet apart, and twelve feet deep. This dam was intended to foster mills and other machinery and was to run from the shore to the island. Another dam was to be built a mile upriver so the water level could be maintained to drive the mill wheels. The dam, when finished, would have had fifty-three wheels and would have cost \$15,000. Those involved in this association, which was often found divided, envisioned a cotton factory, two gristmills, one saw-mill, a paper mill, and a carding machine having power provided by the dam. Other associations included the Temperance Society, the Tailors, the Brick Layers, the Potters, the Coopers, and the Shoemakers.¹⁵

The Shoemakers calculated that between forty and fifty thousand dollars was spent annually for boots and shoes by Nauvoo's residents, and believed that most of this money was spent in cities other than the Mormon capital. By organizing their association they hoped they could keep the cash from leaving Nauvoo.

Nauvoo then was not unlike other American cities in that its residents and leaders saw the need to regulate and cooperate and establish guidelines relative

¹⁵ For information regarding these associations, see *Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 27, 1843; June 4, 1845; March 25, 1845; February 4, 1845; January 28, 1845; April 20, 1844; March 13, 1845 and March 11, 1845. It is interesting that most of these associations sprang into existence after the murder of Joseph Smith and under the presidency of Brigham Young. They were all short-lived.

to those trades that involved large numbers of people. With regard to the matter of associations in this too it was more alike than different from other American cities of comparable size and age.

DEATH AND DISEASE

Not a few historians have emphasized the unhealthy nature of the Nauvoo climate. It appears from reading the diaries and journals of Nauvoo's residents that few, if any, families completely escaped the grim reaper. That death was a frequent guest in many homes did not seem to lessen the sorrow and pain that accompanied each visit.

Some American community historians have been able to verify that women and children seemed the most susceptible to death and disease. In contrast, a study of reported deaths in Nauvoo and its environs discloses that almost the same number of men as women died while the Saints resided in that city. Also striking about Nauvoo's deaths is the number of husbands and wives that died at almost the same time and the number of children in those families who also succumbed. It seems that often when death came calling, more than one family member answered. Another stunning point is that almost half of all the reported deaths in Nauvoo were among children below the age of ten. It was indeed a challenge to reach maturity. A tithing of all deaths occurred among residents between the ages of twenty and thirty, with another 13 percent of the deaths among those people who were fifty and over. The lowest death rate was between the ages of thirty and fifty. The historian must be cautious in compiling death statistics, because many of Nauvoo's citizenry when they had a child die would simply build their own coffin and bury the deceased in their own backyard.¹⁶ Often these deaths went unreported.

Of those who died in Nauvoo under the age of eight, over one-fifth succumbed from diarrhea, one-fifth from the fever, nearly a fifth from canker, while 13 percent died from the measles. A comparatively large number of others died from whooping cough, the bloody flux, and consumption. Over a tenth of the adults died from either diarrhea, consumption or canker. Lesser numbers had their cause of death catalogued as whooping cough, measles, and mumps.

It would appear that at least from 1840 on the death rate and the causes of death in Nauvoo were not much different than in the rest of the country. For example, James Burns tells us that the residents of South Carolina most frequently died from cholera, ague, and other fevers.¹⁷ Thus it would seem that after the swamp was drained, Nauvoo was not a more unhealthy place to live than other American communities of similar size.

NAUVOO'S SCHOOL SYSTEM

While much has been written regarding the University of Nauvoo, less is known about the other schools that played a role in the life of Nauvoo's

¹⁶ See, for instance, the diary of John Brown, Library-Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church Archives). Published death statistics and reports must be supplemented by research in diaries and other unpublished materials.

¹⁷ Burns, *Vineyard of Liberty*, p. 395.

residents. Paul Smith in his master's thesis, titled "A Historical Study of the Nauvoo, Illinois, Public School System, 1841-1845," was able to identify eighty-one people who made at least part of their living teaching school. Of these teachers, forty-eight were males and thirty-three were females. They taught a total of over 1,800 students and their school terms usually lasted three months. The average student load per teacher was forty-six. Not a few of these educators conducted classes during the summer months as well. Of these eighty-one teachers, less than a tenth had attended a university and even fewer had earned college degrees. However, many of the teachers had at least a common school education. The largest Nauvoo public school was the one taught and directed by Eli B. Kelsey, with well over a hundred students enrolled, while the smallest had only eleven students. Most if not all of these schools had boards of trustees, usually consisting of three to five persons. Thus over 300 of Nauvoo's adult citizenry were directly involved in education. There was even one school in the city taught by Charlotte Haven for the children of non-Mormons.¹⁸ The average age of a Nauvoo school teacher was twenty-seven, the youngest teacher being only sixteen and the oldest forty-one. The cost of attending a Nauvoo school ranged from \$1.50 to \$3 per term, and some of the residents paid tuition with produce.

Textbooks used in the schools included Towns's *Spelling Book*, Towns's *Introduction to Analysis*, McVicker's *Political Economy for Schools*, *Help to Young Writers*, *Girls Reading Book* by Mrs. Sigourney, *Boy's Reading Book*, also by Mrs. Sigourney, *Kirkham's English Grammar*, and Olney's *Geography*. The scriptures were sometimes substituted as readers. Jesse N. Smith, years later president of an Arizona stake, recalled that

in 1843, for a short time, I attended a school kept by a Miss Mitchell in Hyrum Smith's brick office. Passing the Prophet's house one morning, he called me to him and asked what book I read in at my school. I replied, "The Book of Mormon." He seemed pleased, and taking me into the house he gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon to read in at school, a gift greatly prized by me.¹⁹

Classes were usually held six hours a day and discipline sometimes included whipping. Joseph Smith III, during his 1885 visit to Utah, recalled the following in conversing with his Nauvoo school teacher, Howard Coray:

In our opening conversation I had mentioned the name of Jack Allred and asked if he remembered him and the time when he, as Teacher Corey, had whipped Jack with the sturdy switch I had cut and whipped me with the slender one Jack had procured. At first he looked a little mystified, but laughed with me as I related the incidents. I told him I had always been curious to know why he punished us that way.

"Well," he answered, "I felt that a boy who when sent out to get a switch to be punished with was honest enough to cut one of a proper size, was not at heart a bad boy, that his misdemeanor was doubtless due to a bad influence, and that his companion needed the heavier thrashing."²⁰

¹⁸ Paul T. Smith, "A Historical Study of the Nauvoo, Illinois, Public School System, 1841-1845" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969), pp. 82-98.

¹⁹ Jesse N. Smith, "Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith," *Juvenile Instructor* 27 (January 1, 1892): 24, as cited in Smith, "Nauvoo Public School System," p. 46.

²⁰ Mary Audentia Smith Anderson and Bertha Audentia Anderson Hulmes, eds., *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing Co., 1952), p. 349, as cited in Smith, "Nauvoo Public School System," p. 48.

James A. Monroe, a teacher who kept a diary, in 1845 wrote:

April 22, 1845. This being the first day [of school] everything, of course, was to be arranged as far as commencement. I think, however, I was enabled to give them some instruction. But I think I never felt my inability and incapacity of instructing children as they should be instructed so much as I did today. Perhaps the reason was, partly, because I took more than ordinary interest in their advancement and also that I was reading a work for the benefit of teachers and saw so many requisites to constitute a good teacher that I almost despaired of ever being able to come up to the standard. . . .

To day Frederick was unable to comprehend the philosophy of carrying for every ten in multiplication. I have promised to explain it to him in the morning. I think I shall accomplish two ends by the operation: first, I shall teach the principle and thus render his future work more easy and delightful; and secondly, I shall, I think, gain his affection and impress upon his mind the fact that I am his friend and desire his improvement. . . .

April 23, 1845. I am exceedingly happy . . . to be able to say that I have not spent this day in vain, having excited some degree of interest in most of my scholars, in the pursuit of two stories, one on the "Consequences of idleness" and the other on "The advantages of industry." . . . I presume I have not yet succeeded in making my school room a place of happy resort, sufficiently to induce my scholars to deny themselves much in order to be present early.²¹

In a letter to the editor of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* a resident described his visit to the school taught by Joseph and Adelia Cole. Signing his name Othello, he wrote,

On Friday last through the politeness of Mr. Joseph M. and Miss Adelia Cole, I received an invitation to attend a public examination of their seminary. Quite a number of our citizens were in attendance, and appeared to be well pleased with the order of their exercises during the afternoon. Various questions were propounded on Astronomy, Geography, Arithmetic and Grammar, which were answered with readiness by the pupils, which proved that the instructors had used every exertion to cultivate the minds of those who had been placed under their care, and give them a knowledge of the different sciences. . . . The central table was then loaded with compositions written by the pupils on the subject "Does the merchant enjoy a greater degree of happiness than the farmer." . . . After exercises were concluded, Sidney Rigdon, esq., was called upon, who addressed the school in a very appropriate and able manner. The pupils of the Nauvoo Seminary number about 135.²²

One old resident in his later years recalled what one of the schools in Nauvoo looked like:

The [school] house was built of rough logs, which were put up in such a bungling style that one would suppose that some person had done the carpenter work himself. Where the logs crossed each other at the corners they were from six inches to two feet too long. The crevices between the logs had been chinked with clay, which was still remaining, except such portions as had been knocked out by the boys. The concern was roofed over with clap-boards, but had no ceiling. The floor was made of puncheons which had been smoothed but very little, and the desks and seats were made of the same material, supported by wooden legs polished with an axe and put in with an auger. The door swung on large wood hinges secured by pins. There were two windows in the house, each one being two panes in depth; room had been made for

²¹ James J. Monroe, *Diary, 1841–45*, pp. 101–3, Lovejoy Library, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Illinois, as cited in Smith, "Nauvoo Public School System," pp. 149–50.

²² *Nauvoo Neighbor*, December 13, 1843.

them by cutting out a log on each side. The architectural bounty of the building was finally completed by the fire-place. This was a huge pile built of timber and rocks, and would accommodate a back log six feet in length, with a large quantity of finer wood.²³

James M. Monroe, and perhaps some others, also offered evening classes for adults. Singing, theology, reading, writing, spelling, grammar, geography, chemistry, philosophy, and astronomy were studied.²⁴

Let us now turn our attention to other less formal educational pursuits of which residents of Nauvoo could take advantage. It is perhaps well known that the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute encouraged reading and promoted culture among Nauvoo residents. Those who belonged to the institute heard lectures on sundry subjects and could draw books from a library of well over two hundred volumes.²⁵

Diaries, journals, and newspaper advertisements give further insight into the range of books that graced Nauvoo homes. The researcher is struck by the fact that few if any of Nauvoo's books were novels. Rather works on geography, grammar, language or theological studies make up the bulk of the list. However, Nauvoo's citizenry did read newspapers such as the *New York Herald*, the *Chicago Democrat*, and of course the *Times and Seasons* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, all of which contained some fiction. There were also a few books of poetry in the Saints' houses.

The seventies quorum also had, by Nauvoo standards, a rather imposing library. This library had holdings broad enough to embrace the arts and sciences everywhere so that the seventies, while teaching over the face of the globe as the Lord's regular soldiers, could gather all the curious things both natural and artificial with all the knowledge, invention, and wonderful specimens of genius that have been growing in the world for almost six thousand years.²⁶

Private libraries in Nauvoo included those of James Ivins, Sidney Rigdon, and John Grey, which were housed in their homes, as well as the George Gee library, while Joseph Smith himself had a private collection of over fifty books.

When Nauvoo's private and quasi-public book holdings are compared to libraries found among people of similar backgrounds, educational attainments, and possessing similar financial resources, the private libraries in Nauvoo are not altogether unimpressive. Though the libraries and intellectual pursuits of the Saints do not compare to those existing in Europe's or even America's chief cultural centers, they do bear witness that the Saints were trying to increase their knowledge of the world and its thought.²⁷

²³ O. T. Conger, ed., *Autobiography of a Pioneer, Rev. Samuel Pickard* (Chicago: Church and Goodman, 1866), pp. 36-37, as cited in Arthur R. Jones, "A Historical Survey of Representative Recreation Activities among the Mormons of Nauvoo, Illinois, 1839-1846" (M.S. thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1970), p. 35.

²⁴ D. Garron Brian, "Adult Education in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1956), p. 55, as cited in Smith, "Nauvoo Public School System," p. 32.

²⁵ Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Society," *Brigham Young University Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 386-89.

²⁶ *Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1845.

²⁷ For a discussion of libraries in France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*

RECREATION NAUVOO STYLE

Nauvoo's residents, like other Americans, had some time for recreational activities. Levi Hancock was often found playing his violin for his friends, while Hosea Stout talked about the doctrine of Christ's mission with Brigham Young one evening until 11:00 P.M.²⁸ Those who held the office of seventy in the Melchizedek priesthood had a quorum meeting each Tuesday commencing at 7:00 P.M. A Dr. Smith gave a free lecture to the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute on a "New French System of Medical Practice," while on another occasion a twenty-three piece vocal and instrumental group performed for Nauvoo's citizenry. Charlotte Haven, while spending some winter months in Nauvoo, attended two balls, the dancing school, and the theatre, where she saw Erastus Snow play the leading role. She also spent one evening in the parlor watching fires on the prairie and tells us that she could count ten to twenty.²⁹

A grand concert of vocal and instrumental music was held in the Nauvoo concert hall where the Nauvoo choir and band performed. The choir sang such songs as "Strike the Cymbal," "Heavenly Visions," "Jerusalem," and the "Dedication Hymn." The band's renditions included a violin trio, a grand slow march, and an overture. Bishop Newel K. Whitney gave a dinner for the Smith family in the Mansion House and at least forty-six Smiths and Smith in-laws came. Nauvoo bishops also were invited, as were Elders Young and Kimball. A Mrs. Peck was the cook.³⁰

Nauvoo had at least one zoological exhibition which people who could afford to pay fifty cents could attend; children's admission was twenty-five cents.³¹ W. M. Keith sponsored a concert of instrumental and vocal music at the brick store, while the Nauvoo lyceum, presided over by Gustave Hill, frequently sponsored debates especially tailored for the men of the city. George Watt gave free lectures on phonography or writing, while a July 4, 1843 celebration was held to raise funds for George J. Adams to use on his pending trip to Russia. The next day over 1,300 people assembled to hear Orson Hyde report his mission to Palestine.

Some of Nauvoo's games included kissing, one of which held that during harvest time cornhusking bees if a boy could catch a girl with a red kernel of corn he could kiss her. If a young lady was caught with a black kernel she received a spanking. One card game was called Grab. Cards were alternately placed on a table and when cards of equal value appeared, the first person to grab them was then allowed to add them to his hand. At times rhymes, enig-

(New York: Basic Books, 1984), pp. 215-56. Burns, *Vineyard of Liberty*, tells us that America in the early nineteenth century was not as sophisticated intellectually and culturally as would be the case later.

²⁸ Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:51.

²⁹ William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), pp. 121-22.

³⁰ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, July 16, 1845.

³¹ *Ibid.*

mas, and conundrums were played. These games pitted the witty and ingenious minds in merry rhymes, while enigmas were perplexing riddles, and conundrums were riddles which had to be answered with a pun. The children played with wagons, rag dolls, spinning tops, and often were found engaged in such games as leap frog, Anti-I-Over, follow the leader, blind man's buff, and fox and geese.³²

At least one issue of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* proposed that residents coat the trunks of their trees to keep the children from climbing them. Baseball was played in Nauvoo and was called "Old Cat." One Old Cat had only a pitcher, a catcher, and one base, while Two Old Cat had two bases, and so on, according to the number of players. The batter would hit the ball and run to the base. He was out when the ball was caught in the air or on one bounce. The ball was most often an old rag, wrapped tightly with a string, and the bat was a trimmed hickory stick. Bases were usually piles of straw or rocks.³³

Nauvoo's citizens also bowled. Ninepins and tenpins were the most popular form. The wooden pins were nine inches high and arranged ten inches apart. They were placed in a square or triangle, depending on the number used. The foul line was twenty to forty feet from the pins. A wooden ball was rolled down alleys, which were smooth areas in the open air. Bowling was so popular and had so many devotees that the city regulated it. The new cotillion dance was also found sweeping Nauvoo. Theatergoers saw such plays as *Pizarro*, *The Orphan of Geneva*, *Douglas*, *The Idiot Witness*, *Damon and Pythias*, *The Virginians*, *The Iron Chest*, and *William Tell*.³⁴

Other Nauvoo recreational activities included hunting, fishing, shooting, horticulture, wild berry picking, honey gathering, exercise, walking in the woods, girl watching, loafing, telescope viewing, and braiding and weaving. People could also go to the Lyon drugstore and purchase not only ice cream but bread, cakes, cookies, jellies, and candy as well.

Nauvoo promoters anticipated at least two parks, one to be called the Kimball Gardens, and another to be named Park Place.³⁵ At least three bands filled the Nauvoo air with their music. There was the Nauvoo brass band, the quadrette band, and the E. P. Duzette band. Citizens were also entertained by watching Indian tribes perform some of their ancient dances. Some of the favorite songs of this period were "The Seer," written by John Taylor, "Hail Columbia," "Parting Hymn," "The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee," "The Voice of the Prophet Comes to Me," and "O My Father." Nauvoo resident Joel H. Johnson wrote 736 songs, most of which are only found in his journal. It was reported that two girls on at least one occasion beautifully sang "The Battle of Michigan." A popular short song for tobacco chewers, titled "We Three Brothers," began, "We three brothers, be in one cause, Bill puffs, Tom

³² Jones, "Representative Recreation Activities," pp. 100–101. See also T. Edgar Lyon, "Recollections of 'Old Nauvooers': Memories from Oral History," *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 143–50.

³³ Jones, "Representative Recreation Activities," p. 91.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 97; *Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 6, 1843; May 1, 1844.

³⁵ Jones, "Representative Recreation Activities," p. 41.

snuffs, and I chaws.”³⁶ Often, with the exception of the last-mentioned ditty, these songs were sung for the enjoyment of the community by the Nauvoo choir, which was directed by B. S. Wilbur and had twenty-five female singers and fifteen male voices. The editor of the *Times and Seasons*, commenting on music in Nauvoo, wrote,

We are pleased to see the laudable zeal manifested by some of our *musical* friends, to bring about a uniform and tasteful style of sacred singing. Among a people emigrated from different countries, with different prejudices and habits as we are, this is no easy task, and we can but admire the improvement made. . . .³⁷

Officially the *Times and Seasons* editor prohibited the flat sound of notes, arguing instead for the adoption of the broad sound. Joseph Smith, it was said, was opposed to anything flat. The Nauvoo Stake also had a choir, as did the University of Nauvoo Music Lyceum.

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP IN NAUVOO

Public worship in Nauvoo seems to have centered around the Prophet Joseph Smith and around one's own family. Religious services were often held, especially during the winter months, in the home of the Mormon leader. Saints who were not able to get into his crowded house listened to him preach through open windows.³⁸ Families often held meetings in their homes and such meetings frequently involved the serving of hot bread and other refreshments as well as testimony bearing and public praise of individuals.³⁹ Adopted family members were frequently found in attendance, which made some gatherings rather large.⁴⁰ In meetings held by the seventies, instructions were given by those who presided over the quorum. For example, Israel Barlow, one of the presidents, in what was described as a “mild and impressive manner,” postulated the following:

Spirits are created the same as lighting a Candle. By applying a Candle to a lighted one you obtain light and do not diminish from the Candle previously lighted. It still burns. This is my opinion. I believe Adam had a father as much as we had.⁴¹

Joseph Smith himself on March 20, 1842, a Sabbath, told the Saints:

the Lord takes many away even in infancy that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore if rightly considered instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again.

³⁶ *Wasp*, August 20, 1842.

³⁷ *Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1842.

³⁸ Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons*, p. 118.

³⁹ Mary Richards, Diary, February 19, 1847, Church Archives. See also Kenneth W. Godfrey, “Winter Quarters: Glimmering Glimpses into Mormon Religious and Social Life,” *The Eighth Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium: A Sesquicentennial Look at Church History* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), pp. 149–61.

⁴⁰ Ora H. Barlow, ed., *The Israel Barlow story and Mormon mores* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1968), pp. 210–12. See also Kenneth W. Godfrey, “Religious Training among the Mormons, 1830–1900: A Mother's View” (unpublished paper presented at Family History and Heritage Symposium, Brigham Young University, March 27, 1974).

⁴¹ Barlow, *Israel Barlow Story*, p. 213.

Continuing, Joseph declared that all men should take warning "and not wait for the death bed to repent, as we see the infant taken away by death, so may the youth and the middle aged, as well as the infant suddenly be called into eternity." He then said that all children are redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and the moment they leave this world they are taken to the bosom of Abraham.⁴²

When the weather allowed, Sunday meetings were held in the grove. There was a portable stand known as the stage or platform upon which the authorities sat, while the audience rested on bricks or split logs or on the grass.⁴³ Usually Sabbath worship involved what was referred to as a spiritual meeting in the morning, followed by a business meeting in the afternoon. Only those in good fellowship were allowed to attend the business meeting, and on at least one occasion three people were flogged because they refused the request of the police to leave.⁴⁴ Heber C. Kimball, preaching at one of these services, told the people not to sleep so much. Today's reader is left uncertain as to whether he meant in the meeting itself or at home. He also instructed the Saints to do away with their grog shops, of which Nauvoo had at least four, their bad houses, drunkenness, and to put away frolicking and dancing. It was also during the Nauvoo period that Parley P. Pratt published his pamphlet, *A Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter*, while his brother Orson, saw his *Several Remarkable Visions and the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* printed in England.⁴⁵ Finally, to demonstrate the high quality of these meetings, listen to the following from Elias Higbee and Parley P. Pratt:

Words are but signs of ideas; and if the Deity would communicate ideas to mankind by words, he must of necessity do it according to the laws of language; otherwise the communication would be unintelligible or indefinite, and therefor unprofitable. The prophetic and doctrinal writings contained in the Bible are mostly adapted to the capacities of the simple and unlearned — to the common sense of the people. They are designed to be understood and practised; without which no one can profit by them.⁴⁶

It becomes obvious from reading Mormon diaries that the Saints looked forward to these meetings and loved to hear their prophets preach.⁴⁷ Others who instructed the Saints were not always on the mark when it came to doctrine. For instance, Almon Babbitt stood and told the Saints one March morning that "he only lacked one thing of being a god. He had almighty will and if he only had almighty power to execute his will he would be a god." Brigham Young then followed Babbitt and said that men ought not to scratch themselves to

⁴² *Times and Seasons*, April 15, 1842.

⁴³ Barlow, *Israel Barlow Story*, p. 26. See also Jones, "Representative Recreation Activities," pp. 37, 41.

⁴⁴ Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 1:63.

⁴⁵ For a complete treatment of Mormon pamphlets published during the Nauvoo era, see David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982).

⁴⁶ *Times and Seasons*, March 1840.

⁴⁷ Those who were not members of the church were not always as impressed with the talks of Mormon leaders and often wrote to relatives in the East criticizing the theology they heard in Nauvoo.

death in trying to carry their will into effect before they have power which is knowledge. A mechanic could make any kind of mechanism when he knew how and not before, the new Mormon leader declared.⁴⁸

Private religious life among Nauvoo Mormons included prayer — secret and family — administering to the sick by both men and women, gospel discussions in the home, missionary testimonials, fasting and prayer meetings on behalf of the sick, sings held with the young people, at which time they sang religious music “with much feeling” all evening, and Wednesday or Friday night prayer meetings. Returning missionaries were often invited into the homes of the Saints, where after a meal they would recount their experiences to the delight of young and old. Even events thought to be entirely social had religious overtones and played a great role both in uniting the Latter-day Saint people and in preserving the way of life they were just then in the process of developing. Furthermore, bridge parties were sometimes held where gospel subjects were discussed intermingled between dancing, eating, and games of various sorts.⁴⁹ Thus the Latter-day Saints during the Nauvoo period were beginning to formulate a kind of religious life, both public and private, that has become familiar and traditional to those of us who live today.

WHAT THEY WORE AND WHAT THEY ATE, PLUS THEIR HOMES

It is probable that not everyone donned striped pantaloons and linen jackets as Joseph Smith sometimes did. However, we do know that Sidney Rigdon wore gold glasses and had one of the city’s first stoves in his home.⁵⁰ Stoves were still rather rare because, according to Professor Burns, they had only come into use in America in the late 1830s, helping to free women from certain vexatious aspects of cooking.⁵¹ It is no wonder then that the Rigdon stove is found frequently being mentioned in Mormon diaries. At least one Nauvoo house had a table, three chairs, a coffee pot and coffee mill, a tin dipper, a bake kettle, a red chest, a box of crockery, a bedstool, and was heated by a fireplace. Furthermore, Nauvoo’s residents prized watches and clocks.⁵² People most often dressed in silk, satin, muslin, crepes, dress shawls, gloves, hosiery, used lisle thread, wore palm leaf hats and picnic gloves, and purchased music boxes and accordions.

A Nauvoo meal might incorporate turkey roasted on a string suspended from the mantel with a pan also suspended under it to catch the drippings for gravy. Other meats would include chicken, beef, and venison. Vegetables consisted of peas, beans, tomatoes, and corn. Mormon families often served hot

⁴⁸ John Brown, *Autobiography*, Church Archives.

⁴⁹ Godfrey, “Religious Training among the Mormons.”

⁵⁰ *Times and Seasons*, January 1, 1841; Joseph Smith to Moses Nickerson, November 19, 1833, in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), p. 302 reveals that Sidney Rigdon suffered from weak eyes.

⁵¹ Burns, *Vineyard of Liberty*, pp. 394–95.

⁵² Barlow, *Israel Barlow Story*, p. 192. From descriptions of Mormon homes found in contemporary records, it becomes obvious that Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. and its refurbished homes may have led tourists to believe that the Mormons were more prosperous while they sojourned in the City of Joseph than was really the case.

biscuits, roasted potatoes, corn bread, bacon, butter, and cheese.⁵³ Families usually ate in the same room where the food was prepared and cooked, indicating that the average home in Nauvoo was rather small.

By the 1840s ready-made clothing was beginning to penetrate America's more rural towns and cities. But Mormon girls, as early as their fifth year, began to weave thread into cloth,⁵⁴ and women often made their own sheets, blankets, towels, and rugs, as well as family clothing.

In 1842 axes were selling in Nauvoo for \$16 a dozen, beans were 40 cents a bushel, coal \$14 a ton, coffee 13 cents a pound, chocolate 13 cents a pound, feathers 16 cents a pound, cornmeal 25 cents a bushel, dry apples 50 cents a bushel, and it was estimated that a rather large family could live on \$176 a year.

In order to beautify their homes, people in Nauvoo were encouraged to plant and cultivate fruit and shade trees, vines, and fig trees, and to build fences and line them with peach and mulberry trees. They were also inspired to border their garden walks with currant, raspberry, and gooseberry bushes. That the residents surrounded their houses with rose and prairie flowers and grape vine porches helped make the city beautiful. Those who needed help with their landscaping and design were urged to contact a Mr. Sayers.⁵⁵ Israel Barlow so loved the orange day lilies that beautified his Nauvoo home that he dug them up and brought them to Utah with him.⁵⁶ While Nauvoo may not in fact have reached the degree of beauty that its leaders desired, the people were attempting to make it live up to its name.

CITY ORDINANCES PROVIDE AN INSIGHT INTO NAUVOO LIFE

A careful reading of Nauvoo's city ordinances reveals some of the problems that confronted the inhabitants. As in other American cities, the problem of dead animals challenged the city fathers. By late 1842 they had passed an ordinance that required that carcasses either be taken out of the city limits and disposed of or be buried at least three feet underground. There was a statute that forbade nude swimming within the city limits, while another required that all newcomers to the city register with the city constable. An additional law required people to be in their homes after 9:00 P.M. and to remain there until after sunrise.⁵⁷ Furthermore, people were not allowed to spread contagious diseases nor to keep any animals for exhibition or for any purpose that might excite passions or affect decency, virtue or modesty. Still another ordinance forbade the residents to allow cows, calves, sheep, goats or dogs to run at large in the city.

⁵³ Mulder and Mortensen, *Among the Mormons*, pp. 184–85. See also sermon by Jedediah M. Grant, May 30, 1855, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855–86), 3:11.

⁵⁴ Burns, *Vineyard of Liberty*, pp. 394–95.

⁵⁵ *Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1842.

⁵⁶ Barlow, *Israel Barlow Story*, p. 197.

⁵⁷ *Wasp*, October 1, 1842; *Nauvoo Neighbor*, June 29, 1843; July 5, 1843.

MARRIAGE IN NAUVOO

Early in Nauvoo's history the city council passed a law relative to marriage which declared that all male persons over the age of seventeen, and females over the age of fourteen, could contract marriage, provided it was solemnized by a minister of the gospel, the city mayor, an alderman, or a justice of the peace. Mormon historian Lyndon W. Cook reports that there were 2 civil marriages in Nauvoo in 1839, 27 in 1840, 45 in 1841, 58 in 1842, 128 in 1843, the same number in 1844, and only 28 in 1845. Of these marriages, only 4 were performed by the Prophet himself, 41 were performed by members of the Smith family, while members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles performed almost 80 of these unions.⁵⁸

Frequently Nauvoo's newspapers included advice, or "a whisper" to husbands and wives. Such advice included such salient points as not to expect perfection, not to point out a husband's faults, to use gentleness and love, not to jest about the bonds of the married state, to consult one's wife on all occasions, and, finally, to leave male companionship and cleave unto one's wife. Other advice included never to witness a tear from one's wife with apathy or indifference. Wives were admonished to study their husbands' character, beware of the first dispute, conceal defects from husbands, make themselves alluring to their husbands, always be cheerful, and finally, to let husbands think they think them to be good husbands.⁵⁹

After marriages were performed, the bride and groom and the invited guests often had loaf cake, or bridal cake, wine, beer or some other liquid refreshments, and on a few occasions the wedding party included dancing.⁶⁰ After the introduction of the endowment in 1842, many, if not most, Mormon weddings were religious in nature and were for eternity as well as for this life. These weddings, before the Nauvoo Temple was completed, often took place in the upper room of private houses or in secluded places in the evening hours. Of course plural marriages were always secret in nature and were often contracted in fields or woods or in draped upper rooms of special homes. That there could be some pain and difficulties associated with such courtships and marriages is evidenced by the entries found in the diary of William Clayton.⁶¹

Civil marriages were not unlike those performed in the rest of America, while eternal marriages made marriage in Nauvoo not only unique but secretive as well. Because so much has been written regarding plural marriage the writer will not comment any further on that aspect of matrimony.

CRIME IN NAUVOO

As the city grew, so did concern on the part of its residents for their safety. However, diaries fail to reveal an inordinate amount of uncasiness regarding

⁵⁸ Lyndon W. Cook, *Civil Marriages in Nauvoo, 1839-1845* (Provo, Utah: Liberty Publications, 1980).

⁵⁹ *Nauvoo Neighbor*, September 16, 1843.

⁶⁰ *Times and Seasons*, February 15, 1842.

⁶¹ *Clayton's secret writings uncovered: Extracts from the diaries of Joseph Smith's Secretary William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1982).

life and property. In contrast to infrequent diary entries regarding crime in the city, however, a reading of the leading newspapers and non-Mormon books of the period lead the historian to believe that Nauvoo was a veritable stink hole of debauchery and violence. For example, J. W. Gunnison informs us that,

horse thieves and house-breakers, robbers and villains, gathered there to cloak their deeds in mystery, who, caring nothing for religion, could take the appearance of baptism, and be among, but not of them.⁶²

Joseph Smith himself declared in the pages of the *Nauvoo Neighbor* that the city was infected "with a set of blacklegs, counterfeits, and debauchees," while Wilford Woodruff informs us that a villain by the name of Rocky Mountain terrified some Latter-day Saint residents of Montrose.⁶³ However, it is difficult for the historian to determine just how much crime there was in Nauvoo and whether or not the frequency and seriousness of crime in the area was greater than in other American cities of comparable size. At least one factor which might have influenced the level of violence was the fact that Nauvoo was a frontier city. The church's own *Times and Seasons* declared that a "gang of thieves had inflicted Nauvoo, so that the Saints had to lock their doors, and secure their cattle and hogs."⁶⁴

Living so close to the river and the Iowa frontier must have increased the chances of escape with one's life and booty. The researcher does learn that two Mormons, a father and a son, were kidnapped, taken to Missouri, imprisoned, and held without warrant by a man named Eliot, which caused both fear and outrage on the part of the citizenry.⁶⁵ In April of 1844 the Rollison and Finch Store was robbed. A suspect was subsequently caught and severely beaten in the woods in the hope that he would reveal the names of his accomplices.⁶⁶ A converted murderer, Jeremiah Smith, settled in Nauvoo until his past became known, as did the notorious criminal Joseph H. Jackson.⁶⁷

David Holman and James Dunn were part of a group bound together by secret oaths, obligations, and penalties who held that it was right to steal from anyone who did not belong to the church so long as one-third of the booty was consecrated for the building of the temple.⁶⁸ These men, it was said, were also involved in the making of bogus money. When this was found out, not only

⁶² John W. Gunnison, *The Mormons, or Latter-day Saints, in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake; a history of their rise and progress . . .* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1860), p. 117.

⁶³ Wilford Woodruff, Diary, May 22, 1839, Church Archives.

⁶⁴ *Times and Seasons*, November 1, 1840.

⁶⁵ *Illinois Statesman*, January 15, 1844, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, May 22, 1844. See also Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Counselor, the Colonel, the Convict, the Columnist: A Most Unlikely Quartet" (paper presented at the Mormon History Association meeting, Ogden, Utah, May 8, 1982).

⁶⁷ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1964), 5:333-34. See also B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 2:224n, 313n.

⁶⁸ Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:269.

were they denounced and forcefully expelled from the home of church patriarch Hyrum Smith, but they were also cut off from the church. Oliver Olney, to cite yet another specific case, was tried for stealing goods from the store of Moses Smith and was convicted and fined.⁶⁹ Early in 1841 two men entered a stable where Joseph Smith kept his horses, cut off their tails, manes, and ears, and in other ways maimed them.⁷⁰ At one 1841 church conference Alanson Brown, Joseph Holbrook, John Telford, James B. T. Page, and William H. Edwards were convicted of larceny and were expelled from the church.

Later in the Nauvoo experience a Charles Crisman, who it was said was a Mormon elder, was arrested for stealing three wagonloads of iron from the railroad between Meredosia and Jacksonville, which caused the anti-Mormon press to publish many articles implicating all the Mormons in Illinois and Iowa.⁷¹ And when the Mormon Therin Terrill was arrested, having in his possession twelve American half and eight Spanish quarter dollars, all counterfeited, the boy stated that he had been given the money by another Mormon, George Reader.⁷² Finally, Albert G. Hyde, a church member, was apprehended for stealing horses in McDonough County.⁷³

It becomes apparent then that there was some crime in Nauvoo, perpetrated by Mormons and non-Mormons alike. However, it appears that after its initial settlement, there was probably no more crime in Nauvoo than in other frontier towns of similar size, but only more publicity when a criminal act occurred. The execution of the infamous Hodge brothers for example, who were convicted of murder and hung in the city of Nauvoo, was publicized in many if not most, of the nation's newspapers. Furthermore, it was even reported that in an effort to protect themselves, their homes, and property, a group of Nauvoo ladies had banded together and were putting tar and feathers on some undesirables who came into the city.⁷⁴

My own great-great-grandfather, Charles Shumway, in an 1842 report written in his own hand states that he was part of a large group of men called "the guard" who had some interesting adventures with criminal types, and reports further that there were not only gamblers but other ruffians who frequented the city's streets, especially near the waterfront.⁷⁵

In spite of some specifics, a careful study of the records reveals that there was probably less crime, less fear of crime, and safer streets in Nauvoo than in many other American cities. For example, the diaries of Hosea Stout, who was Nauvoo's chief of police, reveal that weeks went by without any mention of a crime in the "City Beautiful." Most police activity revolved around pro-

⁶⁹ *Times and Seasons*, January 15, 1841.

⁷⁰ *Wasp*, March 29, 1843.

⁷¹ *Missouri Reporter*, June 23, 1845.

⁷² *Warsaw Signal*, June 4, 1844.

⁷³ *Quincy Whig*, April 22, 1846.

⁷⁴ Douglas Knox to Willard Richards, July 25, 1844, Willard Richards Papers, Church Archives.

⁷⁵ Kenneth W. Godfrey, *Charles Shumway, A Pioneer Life* (Provo, Utah: J. Grant Stevenson, 1974), p. 99A.

tecting the citizenry from the non-Mormons who by 1844 wanted to drive the Saints from the state. Therefore it becomes apparent that the bulk of Nauvoo's inhabitants lived in comparative peace and safety within the limits of the city.

CONCLUSIONS

It is striking that in spite of the rhetoric, the publicity, and the tendency of students of Nauvoo history to emphasize the bizarre, the spectacular, and the unique, life in the Nauvoo neighborhood was for the most part much like that in other American cities. Daily life revolved around making a living, having enough to eat, and being free from sickness. When there was time left over for recreation or pursuits of the mind, it was appreciated and welcomed. People seemed to find great comfort in visiting and socializing together. That the common bond of the gospel brought them closer is evidenced by the fact that discord was not more prevalent. While studies of the Nauvoo neighborhood might not win awards, nor sell as many books as those which emphasize the seamy side of the city's daily activities, still it is probable that such studies provide a more accurate picture of life as the majority experienced it. While the leaders of the church and its thinkers labored in the belief they were building a place of refuge, a kingdom, a Zion or unique city set upon a hill, it becomes obvious that life among the common folk was structured around work and family and only punctuated with periods of recreation. That they had joined a cause which they believed was destined to revolutionize the world and prepare it for the Second Coming of the Savior gave them hope in time of despair, peace in the face of death and tragedy, and purpose as they struggled.

Still, their homes were typical American homes, furnished like average American homes of the period, with education like the rest of America, with average death rates and crime rates. They married, worried about their children, and recreated the same as did other Americans. Their newspapers published much the same news as did other periodicals in the United States. Thus it can be safely stated that Nauvoo had more in common with other American communities than it had differences. And it is important perhaps to emphasize this aspect of Nauvoo's history from time to time, as I have tried to do here.

TANNER LECTURES ON MORMON HISTORY

The Mormon History Association is grateful to Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner for funding the Tanner Lectures on Mormon History. The sixth of these lectures, presented at the 1984 annual meeting of the Association, in Provo, Utah was:

Edwin S. Gaustad, "Historical Theology and Theological History: Mormon Possibilities, *Journal of Mormon History* 11 (1984): pp. 99-111.

The 1985 Tanner Lecture, scheduled for presentation at Independence, Missouri, will be by Langdon B. Gilkey, a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School. The 1986 Tanner Lecture, scheduled for presentation in Salt Lake City, will be by Ann Firor Scott, former president of the Organization of American Historians and professor of history at Duke University.

Historical Theology and Theological History: Mormon Possibilities

By Edwin S. Gaustad

Some years ago when I was invited to address a Mormon theological conference, I spent a good deal of time talking about history. Today, having been invited to address the Mormon History Association, it perhaps will not surprise you that I choose to give some attention to theology. This perversity on my part I am able to attribute to Original Sin. Since you may not find that doctrine fully persuasive, I leave you wholly free to find other excuses for the bizarre behavior of academics.

Allow me also a preliminary word of appreciation, and perhaps of wonder as well, for your charity and your daring in inviting the Outsider to come Inside, not merely to observe and learn, but even to speak and to declare with assurance in areas where you have spent your lives.¹ I do not believe that, in behaving so generously, you run the risk of having your faith undermined. I do fear, however, the real risk of having your intelligence insulted. For the Outsider is in danger of announcing some startling new insight that will only remind you of a dozen or so articles delicately nuancing that theme, of the three conferences given over to that very subject, of the brilliant doctoral dissertation that settled the issue entirely and definitively — ten years ago! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the *informed* and angry Saint. This audience knows the Mormon past extraordinarily well; indeed, you set an example to most other religious groups in America who, by and large, can only come up with the name of an eponymous hero or two, a few facts concerning him or her, and but little sense of how today's church arrived at where and

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¹ See the Forum discussion of Insiders and Outsiders in the *American Historical Review* 87 (April 1982): 390–412.

what it is now from where and what it was then. I cannot offhand suggest the name of any other religious group in America where so large a segment of the membership knows so much about so few: that first generation of larger-than-life believers.

So instead of adding to that storehouse (if indeed I could), I choose rather to invite reflections about the LDS past, about the encounters between faith and history that can turn out to be either destructive or creative. I wish to talk with you about *meaning*, with the clear implication that only then are we really talking about *history*. Together, we can explore some possibilities, always acknowledging that possibilities are inevitably haunted by the risk of failure, by the loss resulting from options not seized, by the tragedy arising from cheaper or even tawdry alternatives chosen.

HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Many a divinity school curriculum draws distinctions between biblical theology, systematic theology, and historical theology — along with such recent variations as black or feminist or liberation theology. Historical theology is that mode of thinking about God that reflects the changing understandings over time. In this discipline, history is taken seriously; the development in religious ideas and institutions is faced openly; the richness that comes from varied perspectives is acknowledged gladly. Most Christian theologians, however arranged denominationally, resist a study of theology that refuses to budge beyond the first century of the Christian era. No Justin Martyrs or Cyprians, no Clement of Alexandria or Origen, no Athanasius or Nicene Creed, no Augustine or *City of God* — the very notion is absurd. Historical theology, in some traditions more self-consciously than in others, is built in.

In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it may be a bit more difficult to see how it is or should be built in. The LDS history, the extra-canonical history at any rate, seems so brief, so recent, a mere century and one-half. How can one expect to build a discipline of historical theology in only a dozen or so decades? Such an effort might even seem pretentious, overly ambitious. On the other hand, there are those who expect great things of the very young, often impossible things. One can destroy a child's confidence by keeping expectations unrealistically high; hope is shattered; resentment and withdrawal may result. The young American nation, intimidated by the longer, richer histories of European nations, endured the insults of those who demanded too much too soon. In 1820 in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*, the Reverend Sydney Smith maliciously inquired: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue? What does the world yet owe to American physicians or surgeons? . . . What new substances have their chemists discovered? What new constellations have been discovered by [their] telescopes?"²

² *Edinburgh Review* 65 (January 1820), quoted by William R. Hutchison in his presidential address to the American Society of Church History; *Church History* 51 (March 1982): 71.

Smith didn't really expect answers to his questions: to ask was enough. To ask the question was to make the charge: a nation uncivilized, barbaric, unlearned, unpromising, God-forsaken.

A similar series of ill-tempered questions could be put to institutional Mormonism: In the four quarters of the globe, who reads a Mormon book? or goes to a Mormon play? or looks at a Mormon picture or statue? Now I know that those questions do have answers — as they did for America in 1820 — but that is beside the point. Such questions do not seek answers any more than did those of Sydney Smith. A nation still hacking its way across a wilderness was not yet in position to produce its Mozart or Rembrandt; a church still overcoming geographical separation and cultural insulation may not quite be in a position to assume its pathbreaking role in intellectual and artistic leadership. Quite beyond that, however, Smith's questions and those similar to it are grossly unfair for they assume that every nation in every generation produces a great flowering of geniuses, that every church at any moment is peopled with a multitude of cultural giants. Such we know is simply not the case.

So with respect to historical theology and the LDS Church, one easy choice (although it is really a non-choice) is merely to wait: to wait for that Augustine or Calvin or Tillich or whoever that can move theological understanding from its nineteenth-century provenance into a later and larger world of thought and culture. But that non-choice rates passivity higher than activity, elevates the law of inertia way above the power of men and women to shape their lives and enlarge their vision.

Beside the alternative marked "Wait" is another marked "Don't Wait." Two options here with respect to historical theology present themselves. The first is to seize that 150 years of the Mormon past with all its historical vibrancy and movement, seeing it as an amply stocked storehouse for much vibrancy and movement in theology. Mormon history from 1830 to 1980 is about as unstatic as one can find anywhere in the modern world. Mormon theology from 1830 to 1980 has every reason, every opportunity to be equally unstatic: lively, responsive, adaptive, creative — always in continuity, to be sure, with that which has gone before. If one asks whether the church of the 1980s is the same as the church of the 1830s, the answer must be a profound and thoughtful "yes" — immediately followed by a profound and thoughtful "no." No one assumes this church or any other church to be frozen in time and space, nor does anyone assume that this church or any other church begins each day anew. Similarly in historical theology no one assumes that Augustine, for example, failed to absorb, reflect upon, respond to the tumult and the anti-Christian slander of his own time. Neither does one assume, however, that the Bishop of Hippo turned away from the preceding 400 years, or that he did not struggle with utmost sincerity, with passionate ferocity, to be wholly true to the "faith once delivered unto the saints."

The early Christian church, part of an Empire far larger and far unfriendlier than that confronting the followers of Joseph Smith, could easily have been seduced into a retreat from all history, into a paralysis of all theology. Jesus was misunderstood, then killed; many of that generation of leadership were also silenced, exiled, exterminated; schism and separation and recrimina-

tion began early and continued late; from Nero's madness to Diocletian's deadly efficiency, hundreds, then thousands, lost property, title, life. Hardly a time for theological exploration, one would conclude, but more a time for hunkering down, for digging in deeper, building the walls higher, for closing one's mind to Greek ideas or Roman philosophers or the latest cultural currents. And yet, as we know, that is hardly the story of those first 150 years of Christian history. Churchmen labored to show how Christian theology had broad areas of compatibility with Greek philosophy, how Jewish history and literature prepared for and contributed to Christian insights and understandings, how Roman law and order made possible a missionary expansion inconceivable a couple of centuries earlier, or a few centuries later.

Within those intellectual currents swirling about the early Christian church, one option concerned the proper stance of this young institution with respect to history. Some argued that this newest Jewish sect should renounce its Jewishness, cut itself off from its Hebraic origins and its ethnic coloration and its outmoded, maybe even embarrassing Sinaitic deity. If only the Christian cult would forget history, then Christ could, like Isis and Osiris, like Dionysius or Mithra, stand at the head of a truly universal, "academically respectable," "fully accredited" world religion. But this early church rejected this Gnostic temptation; it would not sell its birthright, it would not deny or dismiss its rude heritage. On the other hand, many others argued that this newest Jewish sect could survive only by holding to the shelter which Judaism provided; instead of forsaking the Torah, Christianity should intensify loyalty to it, allowing the very best Jews to enroll in a graduate seminar where a special loyalty to a particular rabbi could be discussed. "Survive through the security and familiarity of the safe harbor" — was the advice; "avoid the dangers and temptations of uncharted seas" — was the counsel. But the early church rejected this easy option as well. On the one hand, it would not forsake history; on the other hand, it would not be hobbled or hemmed in by history. One must embrace both particularity and universality. History gave the primitive church firm root in rich soil, but history's power to emancipate also gave it newness of life.

One can therefore do much with 150 years of ecclesiastical life, as one can with 150 years of national life: consider the movement in American history from the presidency of George Washington to World War II, a span of a mere 150 years. In denominational growth, one can do far worse than follow the example of the early Church in *a*) choosing to remember the past, and *b*) refusing to be circumscribed by that past. Of course, it must be granted that the early church also spent much time in ferreting out heresies and the heretics (it seemed determined to leave few for future generations to locate or define), in discouraging dissent and too much spiritual equality, in gradually substituting the soberness of authority for the enthusiasm of the spirit. So this history, like all others, offers us some rare gems to preserve and polish, but also many rough rocks to be avoided or discarded. The central point of this swift and superficial review remains, however, the clear evidence that the early church was not impervious to history, that it was created in time and not out time, that it was neither fixed nor frozen in changeless form. Rather, even this brief period of 150 years represents a significant unfolding, enlarging, evolving, en-

riching, historically conditioned understanding of God's wondrous ways being worked out in the complex affairs of men and of nations.

There is a second option under the category of "Don't Wait": to engage in some historical theology now. This is to move beyond the 150 years that Mormonism has chalked up so far into that larger realm heralded by the official title of this latter-day Church of Jesus Christ. This option involves taking great gulps of Christian history and Christian thought over twenty centuries in order better to appropriate, illuminate, elaborate (perhaps even to translate) the central doctrines of the Utah or the Missouri church. Just as we often place American history in the larger context of western civilization or world history to gain perspective and a sense of proportion, so we camping on our separate denominational sites need some sense of the lay of all that land. We can locate ourselves better on a map or chart in this way, of course, but the gain is far more than that. We can now begin to walk with and think with the giants who have walked this way before, enlarging our sympathies, deepening our concerns, escaping our parochial limits.

A few years ago I was invited to a Seventh-day Adventist institution as outside examiner of a doctoral dissertation concerned with the doctrine of "sanctuary." This is a central doctrine in Adventist history, pertinent to the Second Coming of Christ, but more broadly pertinent to human hopes and human disappointments regarding God's hand in history. Adventism was fascinated with "sanctuary," while most of the rest of Christendom was seemingly oblivious or indifferent to that acute doctrinal issue. Yet a comprehensive historical theology would, I believe, help us to identify common concerns, concerns gathered under the term "sanctuary" for Adventists, but gathered under such terms as "Incarnation" or "Kingdom of God" for many others. One discovers that a whole world of fellow-seekers, fellow-thinkers awaits.

Outsiders may regard LDS theology as so distinctive, exotic, indigenous that finding theological pen pals across the centuries will turn out to be a futile, fruitless task. True, much is distinctive, much is unique. But a great many issues with which early and modern Mormons wrestle have been on the theological mat many, many times before: atonement, Christian perfection, election, progress, revelation, the purity of the church, eschatology — to name just a few. Mormons, like most other religious groups, often speak of theological "distinctives." And critics of Mormonism, like those of other religious groups, also tend to concentrate on "distinctives," though in a sharply contrasting tone of voice. Baptists speak of their commitment to religious liberty and to the voluntary church; Methodists of their Wesleyan concern for perfection and therefore for social reform; Episcopalians of their moderate middle way and their liturgical attention to beauty and order; Churches of Christ of their fidelity to the New Testament in all matters of faith and order. And the list could easily go on. Now there is clearly nothing wrong with all this, just so long as the rhetoric of "distinctives" does not short circuit every other intellectual wire, just so long as historical theology does not become only another excuse for narcissistic introspection. As we all know, a pardonable pride in uniqueness tends to collapse into an unpardonable surrender to self-righteous satisfaction. Then we come to the larger world and its "inferior" religions only through the

reading of pamphlets and tracts entitled "The Errors of " or "Twenty Easy Arguments Against " In contrast, we know our own religious position chiefly through such titles as "The Truths of " or "Thirty Sure Evidences for " When I stand before a book rack filled with such material, I suddenly understand how Carrie Nation felt when she walked into a saloon.

The trick which we as religious historians are called upon to perform is to take the "distinctives," the particularity, the uniqueness, and demonstrate how it relates to or sheds light upon the universality, the commonality, the human condition. Your life "shall be bound in the bundle of the living," wrote the author of one of the most particularistic, historically conditioned books of the Bible (I Samuel 25:29). And the reason that it remains something of a neat trick to carry believers from the particular to the universal is that some artistry is required, some skill, some professionalism. Most of us can get from a discussion of our particular mothers to a consideration of the nature of motherhood in general without feeling threatened and without feeling any disloyalty to the one who brought us into this world. In a discussion of our own religious heritage, however, it is harder to move to a reflection on the religious quest in general without some anxiety, some queasiness regarding our loyalty. Yet, historical theology should assist us in this regard, enlarging our sympathetic understanding so that we can multiply the number of those whom we are prepared to call "brother" and "sister."

Such thoughts as these may seem slightly mistargeted when aimed at historians. But as you all well know, historians in the LDS Church (and in the MHA) are in a position to play a unique role. You are *the* scholarly profession within the church; this alone is enough to guarantee you a vulnerable position on the firing line (being fired at, more than firing). In no other denomination in American religious life do the *historians* occupy so central, so sensitive, so potentially significant a place. You do not have to compete with an array of systematic theologians or canonized philosophers; you do not have to sit at the feet of countless biblical scholars and literary critics; you, most of all, do not have to pay respects to (or at least steer clear of) hundreds of anti-intellectual, power-grabbing, pulpit-pounding preachers. What advantages you enjoy!

On the other hand, what burdens you bear! For the ancient, unending battle between faith and reason becomes in this fellowship largely a struggle between faith and history: i.e., the canons of revelation and authority versus the canons of scholarship and public truth. By "public truth," I mean only a truth that is accessible to all, not esoteric, not hidden or privileged. The pressure point within Mormonism is more history than, say, biology or astronomy or philosophy, for at least two fairly obvious reasons: *a*) Mormon history is recent and therefore more sensitive; it still has some flavor of "let it all remain within the family where it belongs"; and, *b*) that history is dramatic, distinct, and endlessly controversial from Joseph Smith's First Vision to next year's farthest mission. LDS youthfulness is a feature shared with such other made-in-America denominations as Seventh-day Adventism, Christian Science, Disciples of Christ, and an enormous number of Pentecostal and Holiness bodies. Some of the groups guard original manuscripts jealously, some decline to take

history (any history, including their own) seriously, while still others quarrel at length about whether they really are "new" or only a revival of or return to that which is original and "old." Mormons have no monopoly on the anxieties of history.

Mormon historians, on the other hand, do have — if not a monopoly — at least a heavy responsibility as both custodial and interpretive figures. Historians, for example, are presumably more practiced in rising above the egocentric captivity of the here and now: they can take the long view. Indeed, Spinoza centuries ago advised us to look at all things under the aspect of eternity, and the Psalmist encouraged us to think in a time frame that was "from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2). For mere mortals, these are tough demands. But history can take us some steps along that road, enabling us to escape the passion of the moment, the cliché of the campaign, the slogans of this or of any single generation. If we cannot look at events and ideas under the aspect of eternity, we historians should at the very least be able ourselves, and help others, to look at these things under the aspect of history: to weigh, evaluate and judge over a broad span of time and in the long run.

In the first and most significant of the Jehovah's Witnesses cases to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court (*Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 1940), Justice Owen J. Roberts speaking for the entire Court defended the right of the Witnesses to propagate their views in these words:

In the realm of religious faith, and in that of political belief, sharp differences arise. In both fields the tenets of one man may seem rankest error to his neighbor. To persuade others to his own point of view, the pleader, as we know, at times resorts to exaggeration, to vilification . . . and even to false statement. But the people of this nation have ordained in the light of history that, in spite of the probability of excesses and abuses, these liberties are, in the long view, essential to enlightened opinion and right conduct on the part of the citizens of a democracy.³

"The light of history" and "the long view" — on these our dearest freedoms no less than our deepest understandings depend. Much of the tension between faith and history results from the differences between those who look for the "short-term consequences for orthodoxy" and those more concerned about the "long-term accumulations of wisdom."⁴ We should not demand of free speech, or freedom of the press, or of religious history that it balance its books every Friday night. Long-term investments pay dividends too.

Whatever else may be argued about in Mormon history, one facet cannot be debated: namely, that this history is taken seriously. Mormons are not tempted to behave like the Transcendentalists, of whom Andrews Norton once wrote: ". . . the solid earth is not stable enough for them to rest on. They

³ Robert T. Miller and Ronald B. Flowers, *Toward Benevolent Neutrality: Church, State, and the Supreme Court* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 1977), p. 81.

⁴ James L. Clayton, "Does History Undermine Faith?", *Sunstone* 7 (March–April 1982): 34. Actually Dean Clayton does, in my view, overstate his case, arguing at one point that "Subservience to a particular religion is therefore incompatible with honest inquiry, whether by historians or by anyone else" (p. 34). "Subservience" is of course a loaded word, but if the author means to say that identification or affiliation with a particular religion is incompatible with the task of the historian, he goes well beyond any proposition that I would be willing to defend.

have firm footing on the clouds.”⁵ For Mormons, on the contrary, history is recognized for its power, its accessibility, its rewards. The Reverend James Maury of Fredericksville Parish in colonial Virginia and an early teacher of Thomas Jefferson asked: “What Exercise . . . is more happily adapted to further . . . [the] great purposes of Education; such as entertaining the Fancy, strengthening the Judgement, forming the Taste, fixing the Morals, & Mending the Heart, than the Study of History?” In addition to all this, History exercises one’s memory and enriches one’s understanding and, finally, it proves “eminently serviceable” through all stages of life, from that of the young scholars to those “most advanced.”⁶

If that language sounds too quaint or dated, we can shift to a more contemporary patois. Sterling McMurrin writes of the “liberalizing power of the study of history.” “There is no intellectual pursuit more calculated to make a free person . . . to free him from his own cultural bondage, and no history is more liberating than the history of religion.”⁷ Professor McMurrin recognizes that it is precisely in the area of religion that some have greatest difficulty allowing history to do its “liberating thing.” As in personal, infantile, sexual relationships, we repress, suppress, forget, deny, protest until — at exorbitant rates — we are forced by psychoanalysis to face history, our own private history. Then the historical truth makes us free. So in religion, we often fear the freedom which history can bring. We are reluctant to enter the Holy of Holies, fearing to find it empty (which it is) when with our imaginations it has been so richly and wrongly filled. We are prepared to affirm that everything has development, except that in which we firmly believe. Everyone went through the absurdity of birth, and the even greater absurdity of puberty, except those whom we choose to exempt from all history and therefore from all humanity. (The earliest heresy concerning Jesus was not a denial of his divinity, but of his humanity.) The temptation is powerful: to take that which we revere and wrench it away from its nurturing soil, thinking thereby that we preserve it pure and unsullied; what we do, of course, is cut it off from all that gives life; we destroy that which we would save.

Yet why does it seem, some will ask, that history comes to us so often as faith-threatening rather than as faith-enforcing? Jan Shipps has written of the folly of trying to divide all history into the “faithful” on the one hand and the “unfaithful” on the other.⁸ To which I would add that the opposite of history that is “debunk” may be history that is only “bunk.” Our categories are far too simple, our expectations in the short run far too high, our Friday night balance sheets far too obstrusive. Of course, in religious history, as in music history, art history, or any other kind of history, there must be sensitivity, appreciation,

⁵ In Perry Miller, ed., *The Transcendentalists* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 211.

⁶ Letter from James Maury to Robert Jackson, July 17, 1762; see *Papers*, Albermarle County Historical Society, vol. 2 (1941–42), pp. 36–60.

⁷ Sterling M. McMurrin, “Religion and the Denial of History,” *Sunstone* 7 (March–April 1982): 47.

⁸ Jan Shipps, “The Mormon Past: Revealed or Revisited?”, *Sunstone* 6 (November–December 1981): 56.

awareness. An unfeeling clod, though a historian, is still (I regret to say) an unfeeling clod. David Levin of Stanford in a long review of Peter Gay's book on Puritan historians observed of the author: "What he fails to see is that in studying Puritan history he is shackled by his own skepticism."⁹ Devotion must not be blind, but analysis must not be indifferent.

Religious history may present special difficulties as well as special opportunities, but so much of what we discuss and debate is endemic to the discipline of history itself. I can well imagine Xenophon or Thucydides dropping in at the American Historical Association, listening for a time to one of our heated historiographical wrangles, then rising to say: "Yes, well, the fellows were all talking about that just the other day!" Sometimes our progress in historical understanding seems to take great strides ahead; at other points, however, we are apparently condemned to go over the same ground again and again. We do have fine lines to walk: between cynicism on the one hand and credulity on the other, between grand theory unrelated to hard facts and an obsession with petty detail unrelated to significance or structure. We will always have much to argue about, much to revise, even much to apologize for. However great our skill, honest our intent, prodigious our effort, it will remain true that we see through a glass darkly. We believe that there is meaning in history: this makes the quest worthwhile. We know that our perceptions are partial: this makes the quest fallible. *Seeing* through a glass darkly is better than not seeing at all; but seeing through a glass *darkly* is a persisting lesson in humility, finitude, and impermanence. Even as we revise the work of an earlier generation, so verily, verily, shall we be revised!

Historical theology, therefore, cannot escape the built-in limits of history. Nor can it escape the built-in limits of theology. Theology, after all, is not God thinking about God, but it is men and women — finite, limited, self-interested, astigmatic, biased — thinking about God. While historical theology can and does multiply the options presented to us, it makes the impermanent and mutable even more apparent to us. This is not all loss. For mankind has suffered far more from a theology that was absolutely certain and unfailingly dogmatic than it ever has from a theology which acknowledges its limits and never quite finishes its task.

THEOLOGICAL HISTORY

The phrase "theological history" all by itself is quite enough to send shudders up and down the spine of most historians. For theological history bristles with problems and generally conceals its possibilities. If history begins with a fixed and finished theology, then to what extent can the historical enterprise be an honest exploration? a genuine adventure? a perceptive probing of half-hidden causes and mysterious motivations? Or does history become a mere matter of filling in the detail, of providing a splash of color here and a delicate embroidery there? Is the historian like the small child who "draws a picture" by the mechanical method of connecting the numbers of a predetermined sketch? History "by the numbers," if history it be, would have very little appeal

⁹ Essay Review of Gay's *A Loss of Mastery in History & Theory* 7 (1968): 385-393; quotation is from p. 385.

to any of us: little appeal to heart or mind or soul. The pursuit of truth is reduced to attaching labels, identifying enemies, confirming convictions.

"Theological" as a modifier for "history," we may well fear, threatens to take us back to an earlier prescientific, precritical, prerational age: faith and reason at war all over again! For "faith," one may read church or creed or sacred canon or living authority; for "reason," one may read philosophy or science or common sense — or history. In the last two thousand years or so of Western civilization, the sharp points of conflict in history have been many: Hellenic thought against Hebraic canon, mystery religions against monotheism, Aristotle against the church fathers, a new science against a familiar astronomy and comforting biology, and natural reason against biblical revelation. In each conflict, the *initial* reaction was a gauntlet hurled down, a clear and coercive alternative thrust forward: either the faith of our fathers or excommunication, either loyalty to that handed down from above or an exit visa to warmer regions below. That has been the initial reaction. But in virtually every instance of such confrontations, the *ultimate* reaction has been to reject the simpleminded "either/or" in favor of a more reflective, more comprehensive "both/and." Greek against Hebrew? Athens against Jerusalem? Not really, as Christianity embraced both and helped bring into being a whole civilization fed by these two powerful streams. Monotheism against the savior gods of the mystery cults? Not really, as Christianity drew from both, making in the doctrine of the Trinity, said Whitehead, the only real improvement on Plato. Aristotle or Augustine? Both, said Thomas Aquinas in a theological synthesis that has endured for hundreds of years. Either Genesis or geology? Either Christ or culture? Either history or orthodoxy? The false alternatives continue to be pressed upon us; the comprehensive embrace of both continues to challenge us.

In religious history we feel the challenge even more forcefully these days because the discipline itself is changing. As Sydney Ahlstrom pointed out several years ago, "religious history has become a field of study within the larger frame of world history. It no longer enjoys any rights of sanctuary. It is allowed no immunity from the demands for evidence that historians generally make."¹⁰ The rules have changed. Denominational history was once only in-house history; the wider world was left behind, as one followed a closed circuit, a private path. One might even speak knowingly (if unhelpfully) of *Heilsgeschichte* in opposition to *Weltgeschichte*, and all the people might say "Amen." Of course, as Ahlstrom also made clear, religious history like any other "benefits from learned and insightful historians who are sympathetic, deeply versed, and sensitively attuned to their subject matter."¹¹ But to be either read or believed, these historians must play by the same rules, provide the same sorts of evidence, speak to the same large audience. And however sensitive and attuned, they must remember that they are historians first, resisting the temptation to start out as theologians and then become mere manipulators of history. They cannot be historians if they deny that anything ever changes,

¹⁰ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *Church History* 39, no. 2 (June 1970): 233.

¹¹ Ibid.

if on the contrary they assert "that nothing genuinely important for religion or morals has really happened in time."¹² This latter position is not so much theological history as it is theology against history, but it remains one of the reasons that the very phrase "theological history" can turn the blood cold. The dangers are real.

They are most real when insecurities abound, when history and culture seem to threaten more than confirm, when enemies appear all around — or even within — the camp. I wish to maintain that the LDS Church at this point in its own history and at this space in American culture has far more reason to feel secure than otherwise. This church is secure sociologically: it has a sense of community that is the envy of most other religious bodies in America. (The new social history, now not really so "new," announces the discovery of community and brings forth a rash of community studies; LDS historians are way ahead of this game, so much so that one might well give them credit for having virtually invented "community.") The LDS Church also has an unusually strong sense of family and an earnest commitment thereto. It has an ability to make the church — even in urban, crowded, distracted, splintered America — a true center of life: for worship, for study, for recreation, for shepherding one through life's crises, pains, joys. The LDS Church is also, I believe, secure psychologically. Here is a faith that has already moved mountains and made deserts bloom, not one that merely promises to do so. It continues to ride the waves of success, moving counter to those strong tides today of declining membership, declining confidence, declining financial and personal commitment. No spiritual malaise here! On the contrary, positive reinforcement (to use today's cliché) surrounds the Saint on every side: support, assurance, aid, comfort, all steadied and balanced by an internal gyroscope of impressive power. And I would even argue that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is secure historically. At least this is true in the sense that so much of that history is already an open book, so much of it has already provided that liberation, that emancipation which all genuine encounter with history affords. If the church really is this secure, then why a struggle over who owns the Mormon past?

In part, the struggle is endemic to denominational history, to company history. One always confronts this question, along with the widely varied answers: how triumphalist and celebrationist should our history be? Other questions, all versions of this one, abound: how much is history a sanctification of our heritage and a canonization of our progenitors? How much should it ring with partisan self-righteousness and the rhetoric of "death to all my (and the Lord's) enemies"? To what degree is our approach to the past one that sees history mainly as a collection of proof-texts? Again and again, religious history as company history arrays along two opposing sides the guardians of the past who would keep the religion pure, and the explorers of the past who would keep the religion alive. In the pursuit of historical understanding, the ceaseless pursuit, the present always speaks to the past, as well as the past speaking to the present.

¹² McMurrin, "Religion and the Denial of History," p. 48. Professor McMurrin adds: "In religion, the prophets make history and the theologians destroy it."

Dialogue, not monologue, is history's proper mode of communication. "History," Herbert Butterfield wrote, "is not the study of origins; rather it is the analysis of all the mediations by which the past was turned into the present."¹³ The mediations may be quite complex, quite unforeseen. It may turn out that we have come to where we now are more by historical accident than by our intentional design.

In all of this, is there any sense to, any place for "theological history"? Of course, it has dangers; the question now is whether it also has possibilities. Those who might see it as a welcome rescue from hard analysis and long research would surely destroy all promising possibility. The simple question "What happened in history?" is of course never simple, and the easy resort to Providence or self-interest or class struggle as the glib and overarching explanation of every event, the nub of every cause, does not constitute a model for Rodin's "Man Thinking." It is a better model for "Man Copping Out," and, so far as denominational history is concerned, it will surely result in giving Providence a bad name.

There comes a point, however, after all the hard analysis and long research when one is ready to ask what does it all mean. At that juncture, theology may legitimately contribute to a pattern or sense of purpose. Extended historical investigations do not yield their own philosophy of history any more than repeated scientific experimentations inexorably lead to their own philosophy of science. Faith may interact with history not to explain what happened in the past but to illumine what it means. In Christian history, as Albert Outler has pointed out, "God's providence does not amount to his predetermination of historical events. It is, rather, his real presence in every crisis of human decision — where history's *meanings* are born or aborted." This understanding gives new power and new freedom — a new freedom "toward our past and our future [which] is at least part of what Christians have meant by 'salvation.'"¹⁴

Or to utilize the words and thoughts of yet another church historian, Sidney E. Mead: "the study of history-that-happens is always somehow the study of the works of God in history. . . . The perceptive historian sees what Whitehead called 'the eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact.' And in this sense [Mead concludes] church history is a continuous meditation on the meaning of the incarnation."¹⁵

That kind of religious history is, I suggest, too fine and rare a gem to be passed over in favor in expeditions up the side of Mt. Ararat or even, for that matter, to Palmyra. No mediation (Butterfield) there by which the past is turned into the present; no meditation (Mead) there on how God's works may speak even more powerfully than God's words to modern mankind. One word spoken in understanding outweighs a hundred recited in an imposed repetition.

¹³ Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1951 [1931]), p. 47.

¹⁴ Albert C. Outler, *Church History* 34 (September 1965): 260; the italics are his.

¹⁵ Sidney E. Mead, *Church History* 32 (March 1963): 13.

Mormon historians, as we have noted above, are not obliged to sit for hours at the feet of other scholars, to listen endlessly to the exegete or nod sleepily before the official philosopher. Their territory is open and largely unfenced. Their challenge is not unlike that of Joshua who said to the Israelites that they should be prepared “when your children ask in time to come, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’” (Joshua 4:6). It is in answering that question that one becomes an historian — good or bad, of course. But it is the question that we cannot hand over to anyone else, to other authorities, other societies, other learned folk. When examining the stones, the bones, the words, the deeds, our task is to discover and then expound what it all means.

DAVID WOOLLEY EVANS AND BEATRICE EVANS
BIOGRAPHY AWARD

A prize of \$10,000 will be awarded for a distinguished biography of any person significant in the culture or history of what may be called Mormon Country. (Mormon Country is generally regarded as extending throughout the Intermountain West of the United States but also includes Southern Canada and Northern Mexico.) If manuscripts are submitted, they should be book length and ready for publication. If books are submitted, they should have been published within 1984. All authors, regardless of religious affiliation, are invited to submit entries. Entries are not limited to Mormon subjects.

Manuscripts may be submitted to Neal E. Lambert, Associate Academic Vice President, D-367 ASB, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602. The deadline for submissions for the 1984 prize is 31 December, 1984. The University expects to announce the winner by 1 April 1985. Subsequent awards will be given annually.

NOTES, VIEWS, AND REVIEWS

Nineteen eighty-four and early 1985 bring a rich harvest of studies in Mormon history. Because several treat a common theme — early Mormon history — the editors have felt it appropriate to offer extended reviews of each by leading scholars. We are grateful to the University of Illinois Press and Doubleday for making available copies of the Bushman, Shipps, and Newell/Avery volumes while still in press, and to Deseret Book Company for providing a review copy of the Jessee volume.

Editing the Prophet: Dean C. Jessee's *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*

By Richard Lloyd Anderson

Students of Joseph Smith are greatly indebted to Dean C. Jessee for this harvest of more than a decade's intense work on primary sources. His volume contains the core Joseph Smith documents in the archives of Salt Lake City, of Independence, Missouri, and of such other major collections as Yale University and the Chicago Historical Society. Jessee's work is a giant step for Mormon history but also a part of the process of the collection, publication, and integration of source materials that has gone on quietly but impressively in past decades. A serious look at *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* requires some evaluation of its impact on Joseph Smith studies and Mormon origins.¹

Lincoln biography was changed after the 1947 opening of the Robert Todd Lincoln collection at the Library of Congress, which poured hundreds of significant documents into the stream of chronology and interpretation of the restorer of the Union. Similarly, much history of Mormon foundations written before the present decade is weakened by insufficient documentation or by misperceptions of the nature of Joseph Smith sources. Exceptions come from researchers who have done serious manuscript work, not relying on published works.

Jessee now makes the personal writings of Joseph Smith available in primary form. His initial goal was to publish all significant holographs, those

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¹ Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984).

writings "wholly" in Joseph Smith's handwriting. (Repetitive business documents were excluded.) The concept expanded to writings that clearly came from Joseph Smith, such as dictated items or copy book letters that no doubt were originally in his handwriting. The actual holographs finally maintained a favored position, for photographs of each are published, an expensive procedure without precedent in Mormon studies of this scale. The book contains over a hundred pages of photographs, including examples of the writing of all known scribes writing for the Prophet. The result is a bound library of key archival materials available to everyone interested in Joseph Smith. This could not have happened without the persistence of the author, the pains of Deseret Book Company, and the willing cooperation of the major institutions holding Joseph Smith material, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Years of sustained cooperation lie behind such a project, seriously altering superficial institutional criticisms that some historians have indulged in. In fact, the editor carried on a good deal of his research as a staff member of the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and finished as a member of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute at Brigham Young University.

There is no greater authority on early Mormon handwriting than Dean Jessee, nor one more painstaking in editing documents. Thus his large volume maintains archival standards in transcribing all documents as written, with misspellings and without adding punctuation or capitalization. This saves scholars miles of travel and hours of labor, since they can quote a responsible text reproducing the original. As the author notes in his preface, it also frankly reveals the Prophet's level of education and writing skills. The only thing lacking here is some base of comparison. Joseph Smith spells better than Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, who reflect a frontier education, as do a large number of letters and journals of other early Mormon converts. There are contemporaries that spell well by present standards, such as Wilford Woodruff, though his punctuation still falls short.²

Indeed, Jessee is now editing an accurate transcription of the Wilford Woodruff journals. Such editions are the mark of maturity in Mormon scholarship, but they raise the question of whether all quotations should perpetuate writing mistakes. This reviewer believes that when scholarly editions make manuscript idiosyncrasies available, it belabors the obvious to freeze misspellings for all time. Grammar should not be changed, so writers who consult Jessee should quote words precisely, but with spelling and punctuation appropriate to their audience. A careful editor knows his author, and imposing punctuation often clarifies the thoughts communicated. Honesty is of course a prime goal of historical writing, and its end is served in the existence of the careful transcriptions that scholars make. But another goal of the historian is effective com-

² See Elinor Hughes Partridge, "Nineteenth-Century Spelling: The Rules and the Writers," *Ensign* 5 (August 1975): 74-80. Also Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1974), p. 17 and Scott G. Kenney ed., 8 vols. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-1985), for examples of Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff's spelling.

munication of ideas, which argues for accurate quotations that can be read without detective work.

Understanding the contents of this new volume is the key to its effective use. For example, it contains neither Joseph's speeches nor the bulk of his historical work. About half of *Personal Writings* is devoted to the journals and historical statements where the Prophet's handwriting dominates or appears periodically. With the exception of the beginning of the *History of the Church*, these are mainly Kirtland journals and memoirs, where the Mormon leader obviously had more time for supervision and participation in historical writing.³ This does not suggest that his Nauvoo journals are less accurate, but that they tend to reflect his personality more indirectly. A similar premise is at work when Jessee passes by the abundance of Illinois business letters in favor of the holographs and intimate prose emanating from Joseph. Thus the letter section of Jessee's collection features seventy-four letters and six personal statements. A little less than half of these are in the *History of the Church*, which underscores the value of Jessee's work in the present period of collecting and integrating. These "new" letters have been known to historians, but by gathering them the editor has produced a means of testing whether Joseph Smith's language is found in non-holographs and reconstructed speeches.

The obvious goal of the author was to print a core canon, and this purpose disposed him to be a minimalist in judging whether Joseph Smith was the source of the wording of a document. Thus one of the key questions of reviewers will be why a given document is present and another absent. Umpires are not always right, but there are no ball games without them. Jessee's selection is defensible in the terms his preface states, and the result is a tested group of Joseph Smith's writings, providing, as noted, a guide to the Prophet's wording in other writings. The standard of selection involves handwriting or evidence of dictation or an obviously personal communication that only Joseph would write.

Which retrospective accounts of Joseph Smith's life to include was a more subjective decision. The so-called Wentworth letter is justified in terms of its first-person prose, speaking on Joseph's early visions, a topic that he alone wrote about in this fashion. If some of the language is similar to Orson Pratt's pamphlet, *Remarkable Visions*, that apostle had lived in Joseph's home earlier, so Pratt's phrases could originally stem from Joseph.⁴ The Wentworth letter was published in Joseph's lifetime over his name. But the "holographic" dividing line is less obvious in Joseph's longer *History of the Church*, also in the first person, also published in his lifetime down to the end of 1831.⁵ Jessee concedes that breaking this narrative at 1828 was an arbitrary decision. So the most significant personal story of early visions and translation is given, but later autobiographical statements from the *History of the Church* may be as authentically

³ The section of the *History of the Church* to 1833 was first published as the "History of Joseph Smith" in *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 15, 1842–Feb. 15, 1846.

⁴ Orson Pratt, *A Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840).

⁵ See note 3, above.

Joseph Smith as earlier material that was reproduced in *Personal Writings*.

The framework of Joseph's authorship of the *History of the Church* is not well understood even now. Jessee has most certainly not taken the position that Joseph's authorship ends in 1828. The journals of Joseph's scribes in 1838–1839 record that the Prophet was dictating the beginning of his history; in citing these entries Jessee comments that no doubt "succeeding portions of the History were also dictated."⁶ This process is true in spite of the fact that scribes give evidence that they collected and integrated documents and polished raw narrative quite regularly. The balance is nicely stated in Joseph's 1842 letter to Emma, proposing that they leave Nauvoo for a time, taking Clayton as secretary, "and bring all the writings and papers, books and histories, for we shall want a scribe in order that we may pour upon the world the truth like the Lava from Mount Vesuvius."⁷ So the *History* always was a central concern of Joseph's and proceeded under his supervision with the aid of his scribes. Howard Searle's work stresses that Joseph corrected only some forty pages of manuscript before his death, a tremendous insight into the integrity of the account of the early visions that fall within these doublechecked pages. For the rest, one cannot minimize the factual detail of many early episodes of the Church that could only have come from Joseph Smith. At his assassination, Joseph's history had been written in manuscript down to the commencement of Missouri difficulties in early August, 1838. So Joseph's real journals before this, reproduced by Jessee, should be supplemented by the first two volumes of the *History of the Church*, which to this point is essentially Joseph's autobiography.⁸ Thus the "documentary" *History of the Church* has an important value as a Joseph Smith source in its earlier sections, a fact to be remembered if commentators simplistically set up a dichotomy between Joseph's authentic writings published by Jessee and the *History of the Church*. The *History* often contains information that is obviously not from Joseph because it includes events that took place when he was not present. But where the early *History* speaks of a direct event in the life of the Prophet, it must be seriously considered as factually coming from him, or even being dictated by him.

The Nauvoo volumes of the *History of the Church* are the most difficult to use because they were compiled after the Prophet's death. Even here they incorporate authentic personal statements of Joseph from journals kept principally by Richards and Clayton. They also incorporate George A. Smith's amalgamations of contemporary journal accounts of Joseph's discourses, now available in their primary form in Ehat and Cook's *The Words of Joseph Smith*.⁹ The careful historian of Joseph in Illinois simply has to find the source used by Joseph's scribes because they continued the first person mode of their earlier work in many cases where it was not justified. In this process it is generally

⁶ Jessee, *Personal Writings*, p. 196.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 527.

⁸ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period I. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, by Himself*, ed., B. H. Roberts, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City, The Deseret News, 1902–1912). The seventh volume covering 1842–1846 was added in 1932.

⁹ Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980).

not later editor B. H. Roberts who is responsible for additions. For instance, it has been thought that Roberts adapted Parley P. Pratt's autobiography for the supplementary description of the meteor shower of November 13, 1833.¹⁰ But the Pratt publication of 1874 itself incorporated his 1839 description of the event in his *History of the Late Persecution*.¹¹ Indeed, since Joseph was still alive at the compilation of this passage, the references to signs and prophecy after quoting Pratt could well have come from Joseph himself.

In sum, Jessee has published the real journals of Joseph, thus showing their distinction from the *History of the Church*. Other journals of the president continued to be written by his scribes through Missouri and Nauvoo. They continued to record the Prophet's private life and many of his personal words. These later journals are also significant and deserve careful publication, though Jessee passed them by, judging them not as intensely personal as the Kirtland journals.

The result of splitting the Prophet's journals from the *History* is to outdate much of the methodology of Joseph Smith biography. Not one of the major lives of Joseph is free from the flaw of quoting the *History* as Joseph's contemporary record. Thus, as Jessee observes, the language of Nauvoo scribes is often quoted as Joseph's own, and the Prophet's vital personality is obscured. Even Donna Hill is not free from this occasional flaw, but Fawn Brodie committed it regularly, and this combined with her lack of access to the rich sources indicated in the *Personal Writings*, should be cause for replacing *No Man Knows My History* with materials more structurally sound.¹² Jessee has laid a historical foundation capable of supporting a more lasting superstructure.

Many Mormon monographs are not definitive, but really interim reports; for as long as major manuscripts are uncollected or unclassified, interpretations are to that extent incomplete. Because of this, interpretive biographies of Joseph Smith are presently not as valuable as the less dramatic source works. Jessee has focused on diaries and letters as expressive of the Prophet's inner self. His preface takes the position that the Prophet's own writing or dictation is necessarily more complete than the imperfect attempts to capture the Prophet's consecutive thoughts in his speeches. Granted that, the partial records of speeches nevertheless capture spontaneous moments and incisive insights. Jessee would agree that full access to Joseph Smith's personality also requires discourses. So the Ehat and Cook collection from Nauvoo is as indispensable as Jessee's *Personal Writings*. These are now the central volumes of the new "documentary history." Joseph's council addresses are also summarized in minute books, making Cannon and Cook's recent *Far West Record* also essential for Joseph Smith students.¹³ But no one can write competently about

¹⁰ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946), 1:439.

¹¹ Parley P. Pratt, *History of the Late Persecution* . . . (Detroit: Dawson & Bates, Printers, 1839).

¹² Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945); Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith, The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977).

¹³ Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book Company, 1983).

Joseph Smith without manuscript research, for his private conversation is in the Nauvoo journals of his secretaries, and in recorded blessings, which capture his language of prayer. Jessee's inclusion of only the recently found Joseph III blessing was evidently because of some personal notations of the father on it.

What do Joseph Smith's personal writings say about the inner man? A good deal, for in diaries and vital letters there are photographs of feelings. His earliest prose reveals the prayerful prophet. Petitions from 1820 on are all the more plausible because of Joseph's intense supplications to God in his early manhood. Time and again the early diary moves from the problem to the spontaneous seeking of a solution from God. His first diary entry (November 27, 1832) set the tone: "Oh may God grant that I may be directed in all my thoughts Oh bless thy Servant Amen." Joseph also struggles with human feelings of rejection but consistently extends deepest affection to those willing to sacrifice for God. His first response to those persecuted in Missouri (August 18, 1833) was willingness to die for reinstatement of their civil rights, accompanied by these words: "and never at any time have I felt as I now feel that pure love for you my Brotheren the wormth and Zeal for you[r] safty that we can scarcely hold our spirits."

The public Prophet reasoned powerfully about doctrine, and extended the horizons of his hearers. And the corresponding private outreach exists also. Joseph's intense desires and prayers for learning and language are known to readers of the second volume of the *History of the Church*, which reflects Joseph so well because it is closely based on his Kirtland diary. There are pages of candor in Joseph Smith's *Personal Writings*, all bearing on the central question of one daring to be a prophet: "The underlying issue facing the student of Joseph Smith is the credibility of Joseph's religious experience." The answer of the *Personal Writings* is unassumingly eloquent — from records dated 1829 through 1844, Joseph took his role as prophet with unvarying seriousness. And what of the formative years? This reviewer finds insight in Joseph's letters to his wife, who had known him from the pre-prophet year of 1825. For instance, speaking of things known only to that couple, Joseph wrote Emma, on April 4, 1839, the night before leaving Liberty Jail: "those preasious things, God has given us will rise up in Judgement against us if we do not mark well our steps, and ways."¹⁴

¹⁴ Quoted passages are in Jessee, *Personal Writings*, pp. 16, 285, xviii, and 427.

An Enigma Resolved: The Emma Smith of Newell and Avery

By Paul M. Edwards

Emma Smith was my great-great-grandmother. For that I solicit no credit nor enjoy undue pride. Nor, fortunately, do I attach any blame. I state it only because I was raised among people who saw her more as family than as heroine. In such an environment one is prone to sense some acquaintance with the historic figure, but at the same time is very much aware that facts are vague. I am convinced something of her personality emerged down the ages to my mother, yet the stories we heard were always larger than life and difficult to believe. In my mother's eyes Emma was the key. Not necessarily to Joseph II—for that relationship was serendipitous and, though significant, was less than her responsibility—but for understanding Joseph III and the Reorganization.

On the wall of the fireplace in my parents' home were two of the once popular shadow portraits of Joseph and Hyrum. They were poorly placed and attached by a string hung on a nail. This arrangement allowed the frames to shift when wind from the open door disturbed them. Since they were generally crooked my sometimes irreverent mother would refer to them as the "cockeyed Martyrs." Above them hung a small picture of Emma, the frame touching the other two in an attempt to prevent their imbalance. And therein lies a family story: Emma carefully watching the activities of the martyrs, hoping to keep them straight.

In Avery's and Newell's biography *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* I can see the source of such a myth. But I also find fault with this family story, for there is little evidence that it is true. But more than this, I am drawn from

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the memory of extremes to discover instead a woman of more than average ability and insight; who lived a long and productive life; and who worked with two husbands in pursuit of their dreams, but who, as most women, was a person in her own right — an incredibly personable woman with whom one can easily identify, and for whom one must feel appreciation and concern as well as joy and sorrow. And if she kept anyone straight, it was because she served as the “impressionable other” whom Joseph (and later Lewis Bidamon) respected, listened to, and wanted to please (or at least not displease).

From within the Mormon community Linda Newell and Val Avery have emerged with the right combination of ability and insightfulness, honesty and compassion, good sense and courage, to write the biography of Emma Smith — one of Mormonism’s enigmas. In doing so they have filled significant gaps in the history of early Mormonism; provided a narrative of human involvement; laid out the saga of a pioneer (religious and national); and told a story of personal participation and conviction, all supported by a vast array of facts tied together by a real sense of understanding.

It was Nietzsche, I believe, who pointed out that every profound mind requires a mask. The purpose of the mask is not so much to deceive others, but is the honest and simple result of a situation of disunity. It is, for the possessor of the mask, a disunity of non-recognition, a realization that the many parts within them seem paradoxical and often at odds with one another, and that the many faces seem to compete with one another in the public mind. This state of non-recognition is one of strangeness, or unfamiliarity, where one feels anonymous and homeless when at home, where persons are lost in expectations that are not their own. These people are deeply involved where they are, but the very nature of that involvement means that they are not really at home there. This feeling of exile, one that women are familiar with, emerges over and over again in this excellent biography of Emma Smith.

Like most women in history, Emma Smith lived a life of primarily unheralded dimensions. She was, after all, the wife of a man whom it was nearly impossible to ignore. And, customary for the age, she continually walked in the shadows cast by those men with whom she shared her dreams and visions, as well as her generation. Reared in the tradition of the nineteenth century, she could only be identified in relation to Joseph, and later to Bidamon. She contributed in the manner of wives to her husbands’ successes and failures. She bore Joseph’s children and raised them, along with others. She accepted or fought the dreams and behaviors of men and loved them, maybe too little, perhaps too much.

She lived the scenario for women: of youthful energy, of love, of marriage, of motherhood, and a life in response to — if not for — her mate. Even in this day and age when we are presumably more aware of human equality and sensitivity to the unspoken contribution of women, we have the tendency to see Emma as the echo of the dreams and visions of Joseph the Martyr. We presume patterns to her life, and though they were different from Joseph’s, we identify each activity in the light of what he was doing, or thinking, or feeling, or demanding. We assume, as we have always done, that Emma exemplified the best of her husband, rose to heights in response to him, fell as she failed or

misunderstood him. And our comments about her — prior to this meaningful biography of Emma in her own right — have been written about her only to write of him.

It is hard for us to acknowledge the otherness of this sensitive and powerful woman, for in the talk of exile we see the establishment of a kind of boundary drawn between her own sense of being and that of the external world of Joseph and the church in which she had to function. There is no such boundary, of course, for Emma was a significant part of the early church, of her time, and certainly of her family. As well, she was a keystone to the life she shared with Bidamon. But the illusion (self-deception perhaps) existed, and it was communicated to her by the community. In time it became of paramount importance to Emma.

The privacy of Emma Smith was essential, a privacy of life that was not necessarily secret, but still very private when matched against the public expressions. For these public masks were often derivative, often meaningless, and even unintelligible in terms of the private experience lived. This privacy is the awareness of the irreducible integrity of her human spirit — her ethical and moral being — which was often at odds with the environment. This was true not only during her years with Joseph, but as well during her lonely isolation in Nauvoo and her relationship with Lewis Bidamon. Certainly the roles that Emma was to play in the organization and the early life of the church are evidence of the dichotomy she faced; one side (her life as wife, and mother, and individual, for example) drawing her into her private self; the other pushing her further and further into being a vocal public figure with a significant part in the larger aggregation. The former putting her at odds with her husband and his dreams and visions; the latter a surrender of uniqueness that gave her the characteristic of conformity.

Three images of exile drawn from literature might help here: first, the amputation of a member from society; second, the identification of a participating person without dialogue; and third, separation from one's true self. On one hand Emma represented such an amputation. Though it was ultimately self-imposed, it was a separation and alienation of the most significant order. She did not go with her people on their final trail to religious commitment; she did not follow the religion of her husband as interpreted by Brigham Young, despite the support of those same persons who had supported Joseph. She did not join the community when their efforts became more organized and successful. And, in the final analysis, she sided against the source of her belonging, as she supported her son, Joseph III. She stood in separation — often in conflict — with that which she had loved and espoused so closely; a movement she had helped found, a community she had nurtured with her soul, and a people unified with the blood of her family. As an exile she measured the tolerable moral distance between herself and the group and found the community wanting. And, right or wrong, the role she identified for herself isolated her beyond any doubt from the community of her identity.

But more apparent and perhaps more significant to our understanding of Emma is her exile in terms of being cut off from the dialogue of her community. She did not communicate even though she was being talked to; she

did not communicate even though she was heard. This exile was from a dialogue that allowed her to speak meaningfully and in a manner that could be heard in such a way that it would not destroy the community that gave her life. She was not privy, for example, to the code language used to discuss plural marriage, even though it was her marriage that seemed to be the key to its acceptance. The "quiet desperation" that Thoreau refers to is a sign of the serious and personal transition occurring in her life that was not, nor could not, be made public. This transition identified by a distrust of simplified theology, an antipathy toward organizational and behavioral extremes, a seeming withdrawal from the "ideological petty cash" that appeared when needed. She represented a serious reluctance to respond to what Orlo Strunk has called the "shift from problem to mystery."

The third exile is that which Hemingway identified as "exile from one's true self." This does not, I think, represent Emma Smith. Both in her early life with Joseph as a significant part of the church and later with Lewis Bidamon and her family in Nauvoo, Emma appeared to be strong in her understanding of her own beliefs, her own responses, and most of all her own place in the world in which she lived. Certainly there was evidence of confusion, of conflicting values, of dreams misdirected. But nothing emerges from this biography to suggest that she was at odds with herself for any period of time. While it sounds confusing, Emma was at home with her own sense of disunity.

I am not sure that it is explainable, this shift in the nature of participation and understanding that Emma Smith experienced. Perhaps it coincides with Joseph's involvement with other women, maybe even her own changing religious experience. But certainly such a shift is to be noted. And when it is, her life and her behavior becomes understandable — even if not acceptable — to those who seek to comprehend her attitude. Certainly the authors have given us all the facts that appear to be available — and considerably more than we have ever had before — but much of the mystery remains. Not mystery in the sense of an unknown or unexpected phenomena, but something like the mysterious pull of our own lives, unexplained often by events of chronology.

Unfortunately many will judge this excellent biography of Emma only in terms of its comments on polygamy. The subtitle "Polygamy's Foe" seems to welcome such an evaluation. I resisted the temptation to turn immediately to Chapter 7 where the main story of polygamy was found and allowed the narrative to emerge as the authors planned. Any comment I make is likely to add my bones to the pile, but I must acknowledge how well this subject is handled. While not the expert others might be, I am conversant with the documentation available on this subject and am aware that this is an open, honest, and clear presentation of available material. Certainly the case is made, if a case needs to be made, for the fact that polygamy existed in the church from the time of Kirtland. And it is equally as certain that Emma Smith was against it both as a doctrine of religious understanding and as a question of personal wish.

Yet the treatment of polygamy in this biography will manage to insult both extremes on the issue. By those of the Reorganization — long believers that polygamy was not initiated or ever practiced by Joseph Smith — Emma's objections to it will be well received. But the corresponding presentation of the

existence of the doctrine, and of Joseph's involvement in its creation and practice, will startle those whom it does not just turn off. For the LDS — who do not question that the doctrine of plural marriage was initiated and practiced by the Martyr — further evidence of that fact will be supportive. But, I fear, they will not relish the carefully documented opposition on Emma's part. And, of course, the discussion will bring the whole difficult practice before the membership once again.

In this area there still remain some questions, questions of reason and expectation which are often more passion than history. For example, what was the reason for hiding the children produced by these spiritual and physical unions between Joseph and his wives? Surely the doctrine, by its very nature, requires a family orientation for these young people. The efforts made to leave them unidentified (at least publicly) seem to be totally out of character for a people involved in a movement for whom family relationships are scriptural, if not divine.

I am planting no new ground when I suggest that the act of writing is not unlike that of love. When authors are being productive, words literally flow from their thoughts and emotions and persons emerge out of themselves onto the pages. In the process they expose themselves in a manner that cannot be hidden by the nature of their subject. Thus effective biographers are sensitive to and capable of registering the effect of facts upon their own personal knowledge of their subject. They write in such a way as to allow others to share their experience as they see the world in a manner that is unique to them. It is often a matter of courage, for it calls for full disclosure. It demands that the story be told as it is. Thus such writing encourages criticism and misunderstandings. Often it results in rejection — not only for the subject, but for the authors themselves — and is revealing to such a degree that it defeats some authors, immobilizes others, and drives others into attempting to live a lie, thus failing to really write, committing acts of love without loving.

The authors of this biography have approached Emma Smith in a manner that elicits the most from the information, presenting it as the story of a life and allowing Emma to emerge as the person that she was. There is a supreme difference, illustrated here, between the sensitive biographer and the historical apologist. For the latter's role is to use the person — and his or her life — as a medium for vindication of the accepted or as an excuse for the contemporary. The former, however, is trying to expose, not hide, to display, not document, the subject under investigation. Thus the author's concern is with openness, with the real life posture of the subject, with discernment rather than evaluation. In this case the authors are Mormon and thus possess an appreciation of the LDS culture and its history that is nearly impossible to learn. They are conversant and empathetic with Emma's position. Yet they have not felt the need — or the pressure — to make her life speak to the institutional church's aspirations. The pressure to be "correct" has not violated the necessity to be honest. And, unfortunately, the two are often not the same.

The authors have avoided the usual failure of biographies as well, for it is often the case that authors use the subject of a biography as a means of avoiding the subject, writing instead of their own ideas or concepts, or doing a

peripheral study of the husband or wife, or an analysis of the environment of their life. The authors of *Emma Hale Smith* have written nothing less than a biography of Emma Smith. Perhaps this should not be overstated, as if it were a surprise, but there is indeed a vast shortage of models of female life and accomplishment on which to hang this new tale, and Newell and Avery have been model-makers in their treatment of this deeply involved woman.

It is more than a literary cliché to suggest that biographies speak to their authors and readers of their own lives. Certainly we read between the lines seeking a narrative to explain ourselves. This has been true of *Mormon Enigma* and I come away feeling something of the life of its authors, as well as a better understanding of my own. This is not to suggest that the biography is any less than what it claims to be. There is little doubt that Val Avery and Linda Newell have done a remarkable job of researching and documenting their efforts. They have discovered materials none of us knew anything about. They have pursued minor points in our memory to discover that they were major aspects in the life of Emma Smith. They have restrained themselves in order to write of Emma and not primarily of Joseph. They have sought understanding and have found it. In addition they have written beautifully, clearly, and with a seemingly perfect balance between the trivial and the abstract.

Perhaps the ultimate compliment that I can pay them — and that is my intention — is their research, the use of their documentation, the openness of their approach, and the insights and comprehension of their involvement have led them to an understanding of Emma which, in time, forced them to write a story that they did not at first intend. The Emma that emerges from their biography is not the Emma Smith these two authors first expected but I have little doubt that it is Emma Smith. For that I am grateful to Linda Newell and Val Avery; and I am also very proud of them.

Richard L. Bushman — Scholar and Apologist

By Marvin S. Hill

More than a decade ago Richard Bushman, in an article in *Dialogue*,¹ argued that there are two types of faithful LDS history — the first where the believer looks for God's hand in history, and the second where God's controversy with the Saints, His law vs. their failings, are detailed. *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* obviously falls under the first category, but as Bushman says, perceiving when God is at work in human affairs and when men are using their own agency is very difficult. Bushman's work must be assessed, then, as an example of faithful history, since it is largely an apologetic work, seeking to treat the many naturalistic forces operating in Joseph Smith's environment, yet leaving room for the divine intervention which Bushman sees as the essence of Mormonism's uniqueness and its claims of exclusive restoration and authority. Bushman, a prize-winning historian of New England in the eighteenth century, a bishop and former stake president, has his hands full trying to do justice to his high professional standards and to his inherited religious perspectives. He states frankly that he is a believing Mormon, that "Joseph Smith is best understood as a person who outgrew his culture," that while "parts of Mormonism did resemble aspects of the environment other parts were alien and peculiar." He says, "in some passages the Book of Mormon and Book of Moses appear to come from another world entirely."²

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¹ Richard L. Bushman, "Faithful History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4 (Winter, 1969): 11–25.

² Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984, pp. 3, 7.

In his introduction Bushman says that the "usual purpose of historical analysis is to depict persons and ideas as the sum total of the historical forces acting on them." Thus he says, Mormonism has been seen as a product of Puritanism and the upstate New York religious environment. Bushman argues that this approach "exaggerates similarities and suppresses differences. . . . The original and most interesting are obscured."³ The difficulty which he faces here is that an historical argument which accentuates how Mormons were at odds with American culture does not really negate the environmentalism Bushman dislikes, for human reaction can be as much a product of the environment as any direct mimicking of other groups and movements. To argue that Mormonism was somewhat different may not satisfy church members who prefer to believe that everything Joseph Smith did was the result of immediate, miraculous, divine intervention. Meanwhile, professional historians may find his claim of uniqueness at times overdrawn. Again and again Bushman confronts the issue and weaves a somewhat uncertain path through a maze of conflicting evidence.

There is a great deal in this book that is superbly handled. Bushman is unequaled in his treatment of the New England towns where the Smith family resided, the economic and social situations there, and how they affected the fate of the Prophet's immediate ancestors. Bushman's great knowledge of New England is well illustrated in his comment that Samuel Smith's insolvency at death, a burden which the Prophet's grandfather Asael had to assume, was not unusual because of the absence of currency in the region. Debts had to be paid in services and commodities, and a man might owe a hundred individuals while having a hundred more owe him. Creditors were lenient while the man was alive and doing well but quickly made demands when there was economic misfortune or death. Again Bushman's skill shows through when he notes that after Joseph, Sr. lost his ginseng business and was left propertyless, frequent moves to different towns became a necessity. Tenants often had to lease farms that were in the process of being sold. Thus they might remain on the land for only a few years before being forced to move on.

Bushman acknowledges that the Smiths were directly affected by popular Deism, or what he calls Enlightenment skepticism, saying that it had direct influence upon the family itself (Asael, Joseph, Sr. and Joseph the Prophet?) Through the criticism of the liberals in the village and the press, Joseph, he says, found himself caught between modern rationalism and traditional supernaturalism, and the two became terribly confused at times even among his family and friends as they tried to understand his story of golden plates and angels visiting him in the recesses of the night. The insight is intriguing, and one hopes that Bushman will explore it more fully in a subsequent work when dealing with the difficult matters of salamanders and treasure chests.

The author contends that Calvinism had lost its strength over the years and had small influence on Joseph Smith. Acknowledging that Calvinism was a potent force in seventeenth and even eighteenth century New England, he says that by Joseph Smith's generation the family could scarcely connect with

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

mainstream Protestantism. In fact, "Mormon theology as it developed in revelations and discourses showed few signs of having wrestled free of Calvinism. A common biblicism united Mormonism and Calvinism but Calvinism did not establish the framework for Joseph Smith's thought."⁴ Perhaps a reaction to some observations of Thomas G. Alexander, this contention seems to me to be pushing the uniqueness argument further than the historical evidence, and even some of Bushman's own admissions, will allow. To lend support to his idea, Bushman stresses the minimal connection of Lucy and Joseph Smith, Sr. with the old line churches. He overlooks the fact that Joseph, Sr. was a Universalist after he met and married Lucy, and the Universalists had certainly worked free of Calvinism. Although he admits that Lucy attended many churches, he argues that she was never converted to any of them, nor, indeed, were any of Joseph Sr.'s family. He does not explain why she and some of her children joined the Presbyterians (as he contends in 1820, and as I would say more likely 1824) and were active until 1828. Actually we do have evidence that Lucy and family were converted at these revivals, despite his contention that revivalism could have no effect upon them because they did not feel the alienation from God that was the root of Calvinism. When Alexander Neibaur told of the revival where Lucy and family were converted he said "his Mother & Br & sisters got Religion, he wanted to get Religion too wanted to feel and shout like the *Rest* but could feel nothing."⁵ Getting religion in this revival context meant that they experienced a very emotional style of conversion. The "Rest" to which Neibaur refers is obviously Joseph's mother and brothers and sisters, Neibaur's immediate antecedent, not merely some neighbors or fellow seekers. Joseph had been to other revivals, but they had not affected him. Here he was very desirous of knowing the joy of belief and commitment because his family members were the ones powerfully affected.

Thomas Alexander has demonstrated the negative, Calvinistic view of man in early Mormonism.⁶ One might note too the very clear evolution in the Book of Mormon's affirmation (Mosiah 2: 38-39) that mercy has no claim upon one who does not repent. His final doom is to endure "never ending torment," and the passage in Section 19 of the Doctrine and Covenants which states, "it is not written that there shall be no end of this torment." The notion that endless punishment was God's punishment was a typical Universalist argument. Seemingly Joseph was influenced by his father's Universalist ideas on the subject. This shows a movement in Mormonism away from the overly harsh assessment of man and his potential which was characteristic of Calvinism. Actually, most of America was wrestling free of Calvinism in this period. It would be rare indeed if the Prophet and the Smith family were not aware of these changing values. The Articles of Faith indicate that Joseph was aware of and reacted negatively to Calvinism for he said, "We believe that man will be punished for his own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." According to

⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵ Alexander Neibaur, Journal, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁶ Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July-August, 1980): 24-33.

one account of his first vision, he told his mother that he now knew that Presbyterianism is not true, suggesting that he had been giving it some thought. Joseph said that the revivals (which were Presbyterian and Methodist sponsored) had stirred him to ask of God which of the sects was right. I suspect that the great stress Bushman puts upon Joseph and his family's break with Calvinism and Protestantism is due in part to Jan Shipp's forthcoming book which argues that point at length, but on quite different grounds. But in addition, Bushman is concerned from a theological standpoint to see a completely new beginning for Mormonism. In any case, Bushman may push his point too far. I have thought for some time that it does not matter to faithful Latter-day Saints where Joseph Smith first encountered some of his ideas, but rather how it is that he decided which of the competing views was the right one. It is here that the essential part of divine inspiration comes in. To contend that so much was new might raise too many "now wait a minutes" from other historians. Apparently Bushman himself senses some of the difficulty because toward the end of his work he states that "what distinguished Mormonism was not so much the gospel taught, which in many respects resembled other Christian teachings."⁷

In his treatment of the first vision Bushman seems strongly influenced by the interpretation that Neal Lambert and Richard Cracroft put on the 1832 account.⁸ Bushman handles the conflicting versions deftly and provides a believable explanation of why they differed. As he explains it, when Joseph Smith was fourteen and experienced his vision of one personage in the grove, his deepest concern was his personal relationship to God and his need for salvation. Joseph did not realize that this was the "first vision" for he did not know that there would be others. As time went by and he became the founder of a new church the vision took on new meaning. The stress upon personal acceptance with God was dropped and more emphasis was placed on the message that all the existing churches were apostate. Bushman acknowledges that it was not until 1838 that Joseph understood how important it was theologically that the "Father had appeared to introduce the Son."⁹

There is much here that Bushman touches upon without comment, such as the fact that Joseph said in his 1832 account that he had already come to believe that the churches were wrong, from his study of the Bible, before he received his vision. Bushman's purpose here seems to be not to treat all the historical difficulties of which he is aware, but to introduce the general church reader to new interpretation suggested by the new historical sources that have flooded Mormon scholarship in the last fifteen years.

Bushman affirms that there were no conflicts within the family during Joseph Smith's early years, yet suspects that there may have been tensions between Joseph and his father over gold digging. Bushman depends for this view upon the somewhat guarded writings of Lucy Mack Smith, whose Puritan instincts were hardly given to airing soiled linen in public. The very careful way

⁷ Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, pp. 187-88.

⁸ Neal E. Lambert and Richard Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 31-42.

⁹ Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, p. 57.

she handles gold digging suggests her protective attitudes. Bushman overlooks the fact that Joseph Smith, Sr. had trouble with heavy drinking, as seen in the fact that he praised Hyrum Smith in a patriarchal blessing for not laughing at him when under the influence.¹⁰ Since William says his father did not drink, it might be that much of the drinking came in the dark days between 1814 and 1817, when William was young and did not understand, and when the family was in desperate straits as they moved from Vermont to Palmyra. This information might help to explain why Lucy had to make the move from Vermont on her own. The Kelley interviews tell us Joseph, Sr. still drank in Palmyra. Undoubtedly there were tensions on this point, regardless of what Lucy says. I think there were tensions too in 1824 when Lucy put such great pressure on the family to join with the Presbyterians and Joseph, Sr. would not, nor would Joseph, Jr. It might be that Joseph, Sr. felt that a minister who said Alvin had gone to hell would have little tolerance for his drinking either.

The author devotes an entire chapter to the Book of Mormon, providing a detailed account of the unfolding narrative, and much upon the various criticisms of it, old and new. He repeats here his argument that theocratic tendencies in the book during the reign of judges bear little resemblance to republican institutions in nineteenth century America. He also counters Alexander Campbell in insisting that the Gadianton robbers in the book were not one continuous society but several groups with diverse interests over time, unlike the Anti-Masons in America. Bushman points to the complexity of the Book of Mormon narrative to suggest its unusual sophistication for a New York farm boy to have produced. While some of these points are well taken, Bushman hurts his case at times when he relies upon what most experts would consider shaky scholarship to underpin his argument. He says that "individual characters" on the Anthon transcript "closely resemble characters from Egyptian sources."¹¹ Although citing Edward Ashment's piece on the Anthon transcript,¹² Bushman ignores his argument, which Ashment formulated after George Hughes at the Oriental Institute in Chicago, the world's foremost authority on demotic Egyptian, had studied the texts. Hughes and Ashment maintain that the two transcripts of characters are not Egyptian. Bushman cites Ariel Crowley's antiquated piece which compares the characters with some demotic ones to argue that they are authentic. Ashment, perhaps the church's only qualified Egyptologist, would maintain that such comparisons are meaningless, that similar comparisons might be made with Chinese.¹³ Bushman also cites a publication by BYU Press, which has some interesting articles, arguing for the antiquity of the Book of Mormon text; but what is most disconcerting about the volume is that most of its contributors write in fields outside their discipline and expertise.¹⁴

¹⁰ In the Patriarchal Blessing book in the Church Archives.

¹¹ Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, p. 88.

¹² Edward H. Ashment, "The Book of Mormon and the Anthon Transcript: An Interim Report," *Sunstone* 5 (May-June, 1980): 29-31. Bushman cites Ashment on p. 218, n. 27.

¹³ In a personal conversation with me at the Sunstone symposium.

¹⁴ Noel B. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1982).

It seems rather peculiar to me that Bushman says nothing about the theology of the Book of Mormon, and nothing about the possible influence the book may have had upon Mormon thought after it was published. Grant Underwood has just written an article which shows the very large influence that the scripture had upon Mormon eschatology in the 1830s, which admittedly might be beyond Bushman's time frame. Still, some reflection upon the direction of the volume's thought might have been in order. Theocratic tendencies among the Nephites might have had influence on Joseph Smith's thinking about the kingdom of God, but this subject is ignored.

On the topic of gold digging Bushman is both incredibly timely and extraordinarily ill-timed. At a moment when Joseph Smith's money digging is the object of keen interest, Bushman acknowledges candidly that Joseph was a money digger who never fully surrendered his belief in scryerring with a magic stone. Bushman argues that Joseph backed away from his casual money digging is the discovery within the past year of a letter written by Joseph himself about the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the Gospel.

The occasion of the current excitement in Mormon circles about money digging is the discovery within the last year of a letter written by Joseph himself in 1825 to Josiah Stowell in which he tells Stowell that he has some interest in coming to Harmony, Pennsylvania, to assist in treasure hunting. Joseph prescribes the magical techniques that Stowell ought to employ to keep the evil spirits from tampering with the treasures until he can get there. Also discovered recently is a letter written by Martin Harris in 1830 which makes it clear that even among the faithful a money digging interpretation of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was in vogue. Bushman learned of these letters only after his volume was in proof and could make but a few minor changes in his account.

Employing a variety of sources, but particularly some of the affidavits collected by E. D. Howe, Bushman argues that shortly after taking the job with Stowell, Joseph had second thoughts, encouraged by Moroni's strong warnings against any lusting for monetary gain: Moroni said that sacred things must be secured by faithfulness and prayer. He cites Purple's account of the 1826 trial that Joseph, Sr. hoped that the wonderful power God had given his son should "not be used *only* in the search of filthy lucre" and that the heart of the "boy would be illumined and enabled to see the Lord's will concerning him."¹⁵ Bushman says that the family turned away from money digging in 1826 to give their attention to the Book of Mormon. Bushman admits that the money diggers continued to put great pressure on Joseph in 1827 to continue digging and wanted a share of the profits from the golden plates. He cites the testimony of Isaac Hale and Peter Ingersoll to insist that Joseph had put gold digging behind him perhaps two years before the above date.

I believe that Bushman misreads the evidence on this. The letter to Stowell in June 1825 shows no reluctance to search for gold with his magical powers. What evidence we have indicates that Joseph was still digging in 1827 and that at no time did he give up belief in the usefulness of his stone to find treasure.

¹⁵ Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, p. 75.

We have examples of his actually digging for treasure as late as 1838. He made no attempt to disguise his continuing interest. The testimony of father Smith at the 1826 trial does not suggest that he and his son wanted to discontinue using the stone for money digging, but only that they wanted to make more use of Joseph, Jr.'s powers in a religious, God serving way. A careful reading of the statement provides no evidence that they were thinking of quitting their professional digging in 1826.

The Hale and Ingersoll testimonies do not support the view that money digging was in the past any time before autumn of 1827. Isaac Hale told Joseph Smith in late 1826 or early 1827 that he was engaged in a business that Hale did not approve. Peter Ingersoll, who was present at the confrontation between Joseph and Isaac Hale, in August, 1827, said that Joseph promised Hale that he *would* give up money digging, and Ingersoll said Joseph told him he meant to keep the promise. Joseph Capron first met Joseph, Sr. in 1827 and said the family at that time held Joseph, Jr. in high esteem for his supernatural powers, that through a stone he could discover "ghosts, infernal spirits, mountains of gold." Joseph, Sr. at this time told his neighbors of his son's wonderful discoveries and urged them "to embark in the money digging business." It does not appear that the practice was behind them. Willard Chase said outright that the Smith family was engaged in money digging as early as 1820 when he met them and that they continued in it until "the latter part of the season of 1827."¹⁶ It was at this point, not 1825, that Joseph broke with his professional money digging group.

It is true, as Bushman notes, that Moroni in one account tells Joseph to beware of greed and the exclusive use of his powers for the pursuit of filthy lucre. He was told too that his money digging companions were dishonest and that he should part company with them. But there was no injunction here to quit the enterprise itself. Bushman overlooks the fact that later, by divine revelation, Joseph endorsed Oliver Cowdery's use of a "rod of nature" for spiritual purposes,¹⁷ that by revelation in August 1836 he told Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery, who were with him in Salem, Massachusetts, that the Lord had "much treasure in this city for you . . . its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours."¹⁸ On May 19, 1838, Joseph and others rode onto the plains near Far West and dug for treasure in an old Indian mound.¹⁹ Six days later the Prophet wrote to Hyrum Smith, "verily thus saith the Lord . . . if he will come strateaway to Far West and in-quire of his brother it shall be shown him how that he may be freed from de[b]t and ob-tain a grate treasure in the earth."²⁰ In Joseph's view the help of the Lord could be secured to discern true

¹⁶ These testimonies appear in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: by E. D. Howe, 1834), pp. 232-66.

¹⁷ *Book of Commandments*, 1833 ed., p. 19.

¹⁸ Doctrine and Covenants, 111:4.

¹⁹ See the "Scriptory Book," under this date in the Church Archives. It consists of notes taken by George W. Robinson in behalf of Joseph Smith, and much of the *History of the Church* is taken from it, but with significant deletions.

²⁰ Joseph's letter to Hyrum is found in Dean Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), p. 358.

doctrine or find buried treasure. There is no evidence that he ever outgrew this frame of mind.

The 1825 letter to Stowell makes it clear that Joseph, Jr., not his father, is the guiding genius in the money digging business. It is Joseph who answers Stowell's inquiry. It is he who has the special knowledge and powers, and it is he who makes the decision to join Stowell and lead the search. Joseph, Sr. was involved too and active in the business well into the Kirtland period.²¹ But Joseph, Jr. alone, as far as the record shows, had the talent with the stone that was essential. It is interesting, however, that James Colin Brewster says he was ordained at Kirtland to be a seer and find buried treasure.²²

The letter of Martin Harris to W. W. Phelps in 1830 shows us how intimately the money digging lore of the day and the traditional story of Moroni and the plates were linked, even in the mind of one of the three witnesses. The story of the divine spirit (Moroni) and the story of the spirit-salamander are parallel at so many points that they seem to be two different versions of the same account. It is clear that Martin Harris knew the traditional Moroni story and told it in 1827, for a newspaper report to this effect, published in 1829, has much of that familiar story, saying that "Joseph Smith . . . had been visited by the spirit of the Almighty in a dream and informed that in a certain hill in that town was deposited a Golden Bible, containing an ancient record of divine origin."²³

Just why Martin Harris should tell the money diggers version of the story to W. W. Phelps is obscure. But it seems evident that Harris does not feel uncomfortable with the two versions and tells them interchangeably. My point is that it is very difficult indeed at this point to separate magic and religion in Joseph Smith and early Mormonism. Bushman's effort to say that Joseph Smith was through with magic after 1825 does not hold up. We need to know much more about the Christian primitivists in Vermont who were into kingdom building and money digging, were associated with Oliver Cowdery's father and perhaps other important Mormons. Only then can we sort out historically what seems to us to be a strange linkage. Popular magic and popular religion are thoroughly interfused here. Bushman is perfectly correct when he says that the rationalism of the Enlightenment did not reach the common man on this point.

Bushman's book is not entirely new in its viewpoint or research for he relies heavily upon secondary and printed sources. Yet when the work is judged on balance it stands tall. The author brings a fresh look at some problems and provides a framework into which many of the new sources can be fit. It seems that this is the first work since the time of B. H. Roberts that is openly apologetic and yet wide in its scope and scholarly and insightful in its treatment. From the standpoint of the Church it may be the most important book of our time, for it boldly attempts to introduce new sources with their implicit chal-

²¹ James Colin Brewster, *Very Important! To the Mormon Money Diggers* (Springfield, Illinois: 1843), p. 2.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²³ *The Gem*, September 5, 1829.

lenges to faith in a way that can educate Latter-day Saints and not alienate. This is no small task for any historian and no small accomplishment. If the Mormon sense of history and historical development is going to survive in our time amidst the very great challenge that many of the new sources pose for traditional perspectives, it will no doubt be done along the lines that Bushman has set forth. When some in Zion would abandon themselves to a wreckless historical relativity that would logically sacrifice all history as possible truth and thereby abandon any claims that the traditional history itself could have demonstrable truth, it is good to find a calmer voice, one that says that if the story must be reshaped on some points the basis for faith remains firm. Such a voice is an inviting one. Years from now Bushman's work may be standard fare in Sunday school classes and seminaries, for it is a voice of reason and of considerable persuasion on many difficult points.

JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY

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The *Journal of Mormon History*, annual publication of the Mormon History Association, reflects the purposes of the association, "to foster scholarly research and publication in the field of Mormon history."

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Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should be typed, double-spaced, with footnotes, also double-spaced, in a separate section at the end. Preferred length is fifteen to twenty-five pages, including footnotes. All manuscripts are deposited in the MHA Archives after review unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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Jan Shipps and the Mormon Tradition

By Klaus J. Hansen

For more than a century and a half Mormonism has engendered a polemical and scholarly literature of staggering proportions. Its exclusive claims to truth, buttressed by the evidence of the Book of Mormon, elicited innumerable attempts to brand the new religion as a fraud and a delusion, to which Mormon apologists responded with testimonial assertions of the divinity of their faith. Although this polemical dichotomy is still alive and well, a generation of scholars, both Mormon and non-Mormon, has for some time now abandoned this well-worn battle-ground for more sophisticated studies of Mormon life and institutions.¹ Most of these have an historical or sociological orientation, either describing and analyzing the internal development of the religion, or its complex and controversial relationship to American culture. Yet until now, they included no major attempt to fit Mormonism into the larger context of religious studies and to assess its relationship to other world religions, a gap that has been considerably narrowed with the appearance of Jan Shipps' long-awaited *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*.²

This is a deceptive little book only to those unfamiliar with Shipps' scholarship, who will quickly discover that it is the kind of work in which the sum is

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¹ See especially Thomas G. Alexander, "The Place of Joseph Smith in the Development of American Religion: A Historiographical Inquiry," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 3-17.

² (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

more than its parts, where (to use the words of *Bauhaus* architect Mies van der Rohe) "less is more," — in fact so much more as to make this study one of the most significant and stimulating works in the history of Mormon scholarship, as well as a major contribution to the literature of religious studies. Because of its richness this study, though well-written, does not make for easy reading. It requires close attention and rereading to do it full justice, although the author has been helpful to her readers by providing a brief outline of her book in the preface, and by easing them into her subject in a deftly-written "Prologue," a historical narrative of the beginnings of Mormonism to 1830 — the very time span covered (in much more detail of course) in Richard Bushman's *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*.³

Significantly, both works avoid the polemical dichotomy through a methodological approach historian Robert Berkhofer called "behavioralism," a technique of analyzing a particular set of experiences by looking at them through the eyes of the actors.⁴ Thomas Alexander has pointed out that because "scholars using this technique must try to understand experiences in the way in which the actors themselves understood them, the analysis, while rigorous, must judge the participants by their own standards."⁵ He spelled out an important corollary for Mormon studies: "No longer could Mormonism be considered as a Protestant sect or as anti-Christian,"⁶ conclusions supported and elaborated on by Shipps. A disadvantage, as Shipps sees it, is a "tendency to make . . . [her] argument appear somewhat apologetic at times," an irony, she thinks, because she is not a Mormon. As applied by both Shipps and Bushman, this methodology clearly is helpful in advancing our understanding of Mormonism, though in my opinion, avoidance of the polemical dichotomy is not an unmixed blessing, and leads to the convenient omission of some hard questions (more about this later).⁷ For Mormons who want to be both in the academy and in the church, it is also a convenient way for eating their cake and having it too — that is, of having the respect of both the faithful and the secular scholars (in the past, most scholars had to choose one or the other). It is instructive, for example, that much of the "new Mormon history" — studies of the Great Basin kingdom, the political kingdom, polygamy, the Mormon hierarchy, and so on — does not raise serious questions about the fundamentals of Mormonism, being in that regard considerably more timid than the work of scholars of a previous generation, some of whom addressed questions of origins with some imagination and even daring.⁷ Like the new Mormon history, behavioralism sidesteps ultimate questions of "truth" (Bushman avers he is a believ-

³ (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984). The book is reviewed by Marvin S. Hill in this volume of the *Journal of Mormon History*.

⁴ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis* (New York: The Free Press, 1969).

⁵ Alexander, "The Place of Joseph Smith," p. 17.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ See especially Ephraim E. Ericksen, *The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922); and, of course, Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (1945; 2nd ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).

ing Mormon while Shipp's goes to some pains to make sure we know she isn't — yet both write the same kind of history). Nonetheless, in the capable hands of Bushman and Shipp's, this approach accomplishes a quantum leap in our understanding of Mormon history.

Shipp's, it appears, would agree with William James that "the attempt to demonstrate by purely intellectual processes the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experiences is absolutely hopeless."⁸ We can understand Joseph Smith only if we can get inside him, so to speak, and experience what he experienced. Though this requires a "willing suspension of disbelief," if not a leap of faith, confidence in the scholarly legitimacy of such a seemingly subjective approach is strengthened through a comparative historical examination of religions and their founders in other times and places, revealing some uncanny similarities in the origin and development of virtually all major world religions, including Mormonism.

The development of this new religious tradition continues to unfold in chapter two, as Shipp's describes and analyzes the significance of the Book of Mormon and its "author" in the process. Many Americans, says Shipp's, had become disoriented in a period of cultural crisis, had become loosened from their moorings in traditional Christianity. Many of these would be reintegrated into a new world of order through the revitalization movements of evangelical Protestantism, while others would look to restoration movements, such as the Disciples of Christ, who effected a more decisive break with the established religious order. There were still others, however, to whom the entire paradigm of historical Christianity had become meaningless, whose conception of reality had been transformed in a complete paradigm shift, and who saw a full explanation for this new paradigm only in Mormonism.

New worlds, however, do not come from nothing (especially not Mormon worlds); rather, they build on traditional experiences, albeit in a radically new way. At the center of this process was the Book of Mormon, which reintegrated the biblical story of both the Old and the New Testament in such a way as to allow for a complete break with the old paradigm without discarding the biblical mythology. But to those who had come to doubt the old scriptures, the Book of Mormon alone was insufficient to instill new faith. It needed authentication provided by none other than Joseph Smith, the Prophet, himself. Thus, the truth of Mormonism became manifest to believers in a reciprocal, circular process: the Book of Mormon was true because it was the product of an authentic, true prophet; Joseph was a true prophet because the Book of Mormon had predicted his mission. If a modern reader's mind should boggle at such circularity, Shipp's enhances the credibility of the living faith of the early Saints by showing how, through their lives, they were engaged in a process of renewal through replication of an Israelitic and biblical past that made both prophet and book literal realities.

Realizing that she may not have unbogged the minds of all skeptics, Shipp's briefly addresses the question of Joseph as fraud, but quickly dismisses it as a non-question that cannot be answered by shifting focus and suggesting that

⁸ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans-Green, 1925), p. 445.

Smith might best be described as an LDS "*Gestalt*." "*As far as history is concerned*," she writes, "the question of whether Smith was a prophet or fraud is not particularly important. Of far more significance for the purpose of this study is the fact that when Mormon history is examined within a framework that recognizes a process of replication of the biblical story, it becomes clear that the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's prophetic leadership, and the experience of the Saints were all crucial components in the creation of Mormonism."

These, of course, are important insights, and as we shall see, Shipp's succeeds brilliantly in advancing our understanding of Mormonism through them. Indeed, if the Mormon claims of truth were entirely subjective, based on some kind of divine revelation alone, I would also agree that any attempt to subject them to empirical verification would be beside the point. But as it is, the Achilles heel in the Mormon alibi is the Book of Mormon, which, though produced by divine aid, was also intended as empirical proof of the claims of the new religion.

The kind of people who became Mormons, as Shipp's well understands, were often skeptics who wanted evidence or proof and who, in my opinion, were not satisfied by the kind of circular reasoning that Shipp's sees as central to the acceptance of the Book of Mormon and its creator. In her interpretation, "because the Book of Mormon's claim to historicity has been fully authenticated only in a fashion that does not lend itself to intellectual verification, it becomes a paradox whenever it is unquestionably accepted as a nineteenth-century translation of documents that had been buried for 1,400 years." Paradox for whom, other than Shipp's? Certainly not to believing Mormons, and certainly not to unbelieving skeptics. I also have great difficulty in understanding her point that "the story of Mormon beginnings appears to be an exception to the normal modern expectation that natural explanation based on objective evidence will be more persuasive than supernatural explanation growing from subjective accounts." Again, for whom? It is no exception to the vast majority who don't believe, while to most believers, supernatural explanations tend to be more persuasive. Her use of the concept of paradox, it seems to me, suffers from a fuzziness that allows her to slide over some hard questions. At its worst, it becomes a kind of incantation intended to rescue her from the Scylla of the skeptical rationalist and the Charybdis of the believer — to suspend her in a no-man's land of "mythology." This concept, likewise, is a bit unclear to me. It "does not refer to fairy tales, fables, and other forms of *patent untruth*." (My emphasis.) What the author intends is left to the imagination of the reader.

If nineteenth-century Mormons believed that "truth," both physical and spiritual, could be determined empirically, this involved for them no paradox. The truth of the Book of Mormon was manifest both in its historicity and in its spiritual promise in Moroni 10:4. It should also be remembered that the anthropological and cultural context of the Book of Mormon did not contradict the scientific opinion of the day. Indeed, this can be said for the entire cosmology of Mormonism, which helps explain the emphases on physical evidence: the golden plates, the spectacles, the papyri of the Book of Abraham. Mormons, moreover, were not all that exceptional in this approach to "reality." R. Laurence Moore, for example, has pointed to some significant parallels in

Spiritualism. Both shared "a religious imagination that was graphic and literal. The plain people of Western New York responded to visual, exactly measured detail; and whether the subject was Hell, the Second Coming, the New Jerusalem, or the spirit world, really did not matter all that much to them; Mormons and spiritualists alike had a passion for collecting witnesses to certify the facts of their faith. Both in their own way strove after a religion whose evidences, however strange they seemed at first telling, fell entirely within the domain of advancing science."⁹ Or so they thought. For as empirical evidence became more and more tenuous, emphasis shifted more and more to spiritual evidence, at least among Mormons. If contemporary apologists have a habit of scoffing at Book of Mormon archaeology, they may well be mindful of the profound potential for embarrassment of such activities. Here we may also have a possible explanation why, within the last century, there has been a shift away from the Book of Mormon to the First Vision as the focal point of the Mormon story. The Vision, clearly, does not make the kind of demands for physical empiricism that may well cause increasing discomfort as educated Mormons confront pre-Columbian history and anthropology.

Shipp's is understandably critical of this modern de-emphasis of the Book of Mormon in favor of the First Vision because it obscures the fact that "in the early years it was not the First Vision but the Book of Mormon that provided the credentials that made the prophet's leadership so effective." This change tends to diminish her claim that Mormonism is a separate religious tradition and tends to demote it to a mere subdivision of Christianity. But the fact is that throughout the world, missionaries now begin their story with the First Vision, and that a reemphasis on the Book of Mormon is not very likely. What are the implications for Shipp's paradigm? That Mormons aren't behaving the way they should to make it work?

If Shipp's, at this point, has bumped against some of the limits of her sometimes daring intellectual adventure, most of what she has to say is of great value. It is just that a complex religion such as Mormonism is unlikely to be fully represented by any analytical model. In all fairness, it should also be conceded that by chapter two, we have not yet been fully initiated into all the details and subtleties of her ambitious framework. These she continues to unfold in chapter three, "History as Text," which, after some comments not entirely to my liking (yes, more paradox), emerges as the most imaginative, original, and significant chapter in the book — the centerpiece.

Some of these ideas we have already encountered in previous chapters, after Shipp's has given us a general idea what her book is about in her preface. She proceeds by way of an analogy between the history of Christianity and the history of Mormonism. Early Christians, she says, "thought of themselves in Hebraic terms. . . . But as Christianity developed, . . . it gradually became clear" that the new religion "included important elements that were not a part of Israel's tradition. Without fully and consciously realizing that they were doing so, the followers of Jesus established a new religious tradition." Mor-

⁹ *In Search of White Crows: Spiritualism, Parapsychology, and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 7, 50.

monism “began as a movement that understood itself as Christian,” but almost from its inception “embarked on a path that led to developments that now distinguish . . . [its] tradition from the Christian tradition as surely as early Christianity was distinguished from its Hebraic context.”

On a superficial level, of course, her analogy is not new. In her preface to *No Man Knows My History*, Fawn Brodie observed nearly forty years ago that Mormonism “was a real religious creation, one intended to be to Christianity as Christianity was to Judaism: that is a reform and a consummation.”¹⁰ At first glance, this pithy aphorism might well have served as a text for Shipp’s study. Yet a close reading makes it quite clear that she does a great deal more than merely run with Brodie’s quotation. Prior to Shipp’s, it was Mario De Pillis who had advanced the most ambitious and forceful elaboration of Brodie’s argument that Mormonism was a separate religious tradition. He proposed to add Mormonism as a fourth Judaeo-Christian religion to the trinity of Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism — a claim that aroused vigorous dissent from the late Protestant church historian William A. Clebsch.¹¹ Shipp is more far-ranging in her analogy, using a broader frame-work, and an interdisciplinary approach that includes scholars such as Mircea Eliade, Northrop Frye, Thomas Kuhn, Peter Berger, and John Gager (among others). Obviously, Clebsch would have had to gear up for a considerably more ambitious critique to attempt a refutation of her work.

Shipp begins her analysis with an original elaboration of the traditional church-sect typology of sociologists of religion by dividing religions into four social-psychological categories — church, denomination, sect, cult. She defines *church* as an institution that assumes “direct responsibility for the whole of a tradition’s story.” Catholicism is an obvious example. *Denomination* is essentially a subdivision of a church, relating in idiosyncratic ways to the larger body, such as Presbyterianism or Methodism to Protestantism. *Sects* coalesce around leaders who disagree in fundamental ways about how a tradition should be interpreted, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses or Seventh-Day Adventists. *Cults*, however, are groups who mount “a challenge to the fundamental integrity of a tradition’s story by adding to it, subtracting from it, or by changing it in some more radical way than merely setting out a new interpretation of the events and happenings in the existing story.”

Not surprisingly, Shipp believes that Mormonism fits into this category. Those Mormons who feel they must swallow hard to accept a term with such pejorative connotations should realize that they are in good company, for Shipp, in setting up her analogy, labels early Christianity likewise a cult — a Jewish cult, just as Mormonism is a Christian cult. Unlike sects, who remain under the same categorical umbrellas as their adversaries, in a cult, “the altered story eventually becomes central to a new system of belief that serves as the foundation of a new religious tradition.” In times of cultural crisis, innumerable

¹⁰ Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, p. viii.

¹¹ De Pillis, “The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism,” *Dialogue* 1 (Spring 1966): 68–88; Clebsch, “Each Sect, the Sect to End All Sects,” *ibid.* (Summer 1966): 84–89.

sects and cults arise to challenge, with their babel of voices, the traditional order. Most of the significant religious movements arising out of this chaos have sectarian origins — “Pharisaic Jews, for example, Seventh-day Adventists, Christian Scientists, or the so-called Jesus Freaks” — who gradually found a niche within the traditions that spawned them. Yet of the cultic movements, most have fallen by the wayside, and today “only Christianity and Mormonism are . . . full-scale religious traditions.” Quite a claim — and one that should enable even the most squeamish of Mormons to accept eagerly the label cult in this context.

If structure is important to Shipp's, context, of course, is even more so. Just how did Mormonism succeed where other movements failed? At the core of Shipp's explanation is Mormonism's unique relationship to the past. Even the most radical sects of the Reformation shared with their opponents the common history of Christian Europe. So did all the churches, denominations, and sects that grew like mushrooms in the fertile spiritual soil of North America — with the exception of the Mormons. Actually, says Shipp's, “the very first Mormons did not merely have a past that differed from the past of other nineteenth-century Americans; they had no recent past at all.” Their Old World past ended with the Great Apostasy, shortly after the death of the apostles, while the history of the Book of Mormon ended in the fifth century A.D. This meant that the historical past of the scriptures took on for the Mormons an immediacy and a reality it lacked even for the most literal and fundamentalist of Protestant sects by wiping the slate clean of some 1,400 years of history. Thus, as the Saints established the kingdom of God on the basis of ancient and “modern” scriptures, they moved into the future by replicating the past, an act that must not be interpreted as “conscious re-creation of events, but rather experiential ‘living through’ of sacred events in a new age.” It is in this way that the Saints recovered “their own past,” their own salvation history which, in spite of similarities in structure and content, “was the *Heilsgeschichte* of neither Christian nor Jew.” As in early Christianity, the pattern of recovery included four principal activities, reiteration of a sacred story, theological reinterpretation in the light of contemporary eschatology, the actual recapitulation of key events of the story, and ritual re-creation of the story in the new context. In the case of Mormonism, this pattern of recovery involved key events in Israelite as well as early Christian history.

Now, to Mormons conversant with their history the Israelite analogy is not exactly news. Indeed, Shipp's recognizes that nearly every writer who has ever attempted a narrative reconstruction of the Mormon past has made some use of the connection between Israelite history and the nineteenth-century Mormon experience. Shipp's, however, argues that the Mormon recapitulation of the Hebrew-Christian story does not follow in linear fashion chronological accounts of LDS history. Rather than revealing itself in the exterior story, the recapitulation process unfolds through an interior story of some complexity, that involves both the Mormon appropriation of the Israelite story as well as the reappropriation of Christianity's appropriation of the same story. Shipp's then gives an outline and some detailed examples of this kind of interior history as convincing proof for her argument. This process came to an end with the

cessation of polygamy and the metamorphosis of the kingdom: "With Zion and Babylon come to terms, the past was filled up; complete." From then on, Mormons would continue to reiterate and reinterpret their past, but replication would now come only in the form of ritual re-creation, a conscious and purposeful playing out of the sacred story that differed fundamentally from the unconscious process of recapitulation in the formative period. In their transition from cultic movement to religious tradition, Mormons have acquired a unique understanding of the gospel that rests on history as well as theology (a relationship, by the way, that is particularly pronounced in that other religious tradition, Catholicism).

Shipp's uses that relationship to good effect in her next chapter, which illuminates the fundamental difference between the concepts *reformation* and *restoration* in Mormon thought and practice. It is here, especially, that in the eyes of knowledgeable Mormons the author may well appear as less original than the tone of discovery in this essay merits. Such potential critics, however, should be mindful that an outsider who looks afresh at evidence that to most Mormons is simply part of the given world can for that very reason arrive at insights that are obvious only from hindsight. Yes, all Mormons think they know the difference between reformation and restoration, and much of what Shipp has to say confirms the wisdom of the Mormon classroom. Yet, if all Shipp had done was to articulate what Mormons "know," this would have been no mean achievement. Of course, she does considerably more than that by showing how the difference illuminates the genesis of Mormonism as a religious tradition. The original impulse of the restoration, she argues, was reformist, akin to "primitivist" movements such as the Disciples of Christ. It was the historical experience of replication, beginning at Kirtland, that transformed Mormonism into a restoration movement with its heavy emphasis on Israelite parallels. Thus, early Mormonism experienced a tension that was resolved only after the death of Joseph, when those who conceived of themselves as a modern Israel, and those who saw Mormonism as a restoration of Christian primitivism, went their separate ways.

It bears repeating that this process of replication was largely unconscious, its full meaning hidden from the immediate participants. This is one reason why, by 1844, sincere and honest believers had begun to differ in their interpretation of the fundamentals of Mormonism. Such an act of taking sides, of course, involved a conscious looking back and represented an early process of historical reconstruction that came into full flower only after the sojourn in sacred space and time had been completed. When Brigham Young, in 1865, suppressed Orson Pratt's 1853 Liverpool edition of Lucy Mack Smith's *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*,¹² it was a self-conscious act of someone who had anticipated Orwell's insight that "he who controls the past controls the future and he who controls the present controls the past." In this case, Lucy's history was an implicit challenge not only to Brigham's leadership at a time when Joseph's son had been established at the helm of the "Restoration,"

¹² The full title is *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations*.

but also to the entire replication of sacred history from Kirtland to Nauvoo (as Brigham and his followers had perceived it) in favor of an earlier Mormonism that was "familial, even tribal, rather than organizational and institutional." Shipp's goes to some pains to insist that the struggle was not between legitimacy and illegitimacy, "but a struggle between forms of legitimacy — almost in classic Weberian terms." Yet the burden of Shipp's argument is that those criteria she sees as fundamental to the establishment of a new religious tradition apply primarily to Utah Mormonism. Of course, this does not mean that she approves of Young's suppression of Lucy's history, which she regards as an essential and reliable account of the Smith family history and the beginnings of Mormonism.

Brigham's suppression of Lucy's history was one of the first and most important incidents in the continuing process of historical reconstruction through which a new religious tradition imposes order "on the present by imposing order on the chaotic generative years out of which it emerged, and from which it draws its inspiration and its strength" — a process for which the recent suppression of *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* by James B. Allen and Glen Leonard is a prime contemporary example, suggesting that the institutionalization of orthodoxy is far from complete.¹³

The ongoing drama of the reconstruction of the Mormon past is linked to a number of wrenching changes that have transformed Mormonism over time. The first of these involved the very establishment of Mormonism as a religious tradition — the transformation of a restoration movement intended to bring back the primitive gospel into a radical kingdom of God encompassing the entire spiritual, social, economic, and political concerns of the Saints, institutionalized in communitarian experiments, plural marriage, and the political kingdom. The second of these, ironically, occurred at the turn of the century, when Mormonism was forced to give up precisely those institutions that, more than any other, seemed to be at the very core of their identity as a new religious tradition.

Samuel W. Taylor and I, perhaps more than any other historians, have emphasized the dramatic and traumatic nature of this metamorphosis. "Are we still Mormons?" I asked with a rhetorical flourish some years ago, suggested in another essay that today Mormons of Independence and Utah are separated more by history and tradition than by institutions and dogma, and in a recent fit of hyperbole hypothesized that "Mormonism . . . has experienced a social and intellectual transformation of such magnitude that a resurrected Joseph Smith . . . might well wonder if this was indeed the same church he had founded."¹⁴ Nervous about such attacks, apologists made it too easy for themselves by insisting that Mormonism had not changed in its essentials, con-

¹³ (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976). Thirty-five thousand copies of this work were sold. It has not been reprinted, and it isn't likely that it will in the near future.

¹⁴ For Taylor, see especially *The Kingdom of God or Nothing: The Life of John Taylor, Militant Mormon* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1976), and *Rocky Mountain Empire: The Latter-day Saints Today* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1978); Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, p. 147.

veniently identifying as the enduring constants those traditions that had survived, thus relegating the kingdom and its various institutional manifestations if not to oblivion then to a growing attic of quaint historical Mormonia. The easiest solution of all was to perform an Orwellian hat trick and to pretend — as some scholars and church leaders did — that the kingdom was merely a figment of the imagination of anti-Mormons, apostates, and fundamentalists. Altogether, Mormon denials of wrenching changes have been based on assertion rather than convincing evidence.¹⁵

In chapter six, “In and Out of Time,” Jan Shipps ingeniously manages to juggle change and continuity without doing violence to the historical record, while at the same time accepting the legitimacy of modern institutionalization of Mormon orthodoxy. Acknowledging the reality of change, she unabashedly underscores the importance of the kingdom by asserting that if anything, historians have underemphasized its significance, but that its demise, far from signaling the death of Mormonism, was an essential and necessary process in its development into a religious tradition. In the kingdom the Saints were outside the constraints of ordinary time, a condition possible only during the formative period of a religious tradition. Eventually, however, they (like the early Christians) had to be forced — perhaps kicking and screaming — back into “time,” into the world.

Shipps acknowledges the enormous trauma this process engendered, suggesting that the wounds have not fully healed, even to this day, but implying also that all major religious traditions had to pay a high price for their sojourn out of time and back. But to reiterate, even as the kingdom had to return into time, and in the process be transformed almost beyond recognition, its original manifestation was essential to the formation of the religious tradition that is Mormonism. Thus, under Shipps’ creative pen, an essential part of the Mormon past, far from being an embarrassment to contemporary Saints, becomes a vital component of their religion as they stand “in the presence of the past.”

In a suggestive final chapter, Shipps carefully analyzes a sermon by President Joseph F. Smith at a general conference in 1916 to show “how Mormonism was able to move out of its own ‘apostolic era,’ to transform itself and gear up for the long run.” This, as we all know, it has accomplished effectively, moving flat out towards an ever more elusive millennium.

By way of conclusion I wish to bring into sharper focus some of my fundamental disagreements with Jan Shipps, but not before summing up her achievement. In a stunning tour de force she has succeeded in explaining Mormonism to the secular community of scholars of religion, and at the same time has helped Mormons understand some of the most difficult and paradoxical aspects of their past. A major reason for her success is her historicist approach, which allows her to dismiss epithets such as fraud or delusion as utterly irrelevant to the kind of questions she asks.

Yet however delighted Mormons will undoubtedly be with her work, they should pause and reflect that there is something very un-Mormon about Shipps’

¹⁵ See especially Gordon C. Thomasson, “Foolsmate,” *Dialogue* 6 (Autumn–Winter 1971): 148–51; Klaus Hansen, “Are We Still Mormons,” *Dialogue* 4 (Spring 1961): 101–106; and “The World of the Prophet,” *Dialogue* 1 (Summer 1966): 103–107.

approach. It is precisely this experiential, pluralistic concept of truth that Joseph Smith challenged. In opposition to modern relativist metaphysical assumptions emphasizing process and consciousness, Joseph Smith believed in an objective reality "out there," in natural laws that could be discovered, in the tradition of Newton (and later Einstein, who was of course no metaphysical relativist), and tested empirically. From this perspective it is not enough to assert that "reality" consists of what you believe; rather, what you believe must be tested against "reality."

To Shipps it does not matter that modern scholarship raises virtually insurmountable obstacles to the historicity of the Book of Mormon, and she is undisturbed by the utter lack of scholarly correlation between the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Book of Abraham. Significantly, those who are bothered by such discrepancies are largely multi-generational Mormons such as Fawn Brodie, Sterling McMurrin, and the author of this essay, who were brought up to believe that if the Book of Mormon wasn't true, it must be a monumental fraud. Thus, what the skeptics did was to challenge Mormonism on its own ground, while Shipps has shifted the ground.

Not too long ago I suggested that the ball Brodie had lobbed into the Mormon court had not yet been returned.¹⁶ Shipps obviously believes it should be left where it is — that Brodie's game is over. Perhaps it is. Yet if Mormons, for obvious reasons, are well advised to follow Shipps' lead, they should do so, ironically, precisely because Brodie's most fundamental challenge probably cannot be answered. Thus, like Banquo's ghost, Fawn Brodie continues to haunt us because of her concern for something called truth, something — I like to think — Joseph Smith would have understood, but Jan Shipps dismisses as irrelevant.

¹⁶ In spite of my agreement with Brodie on her most fundamental arguments regarding the historicity of the Book of Mormon I am also in agreement with most of the criticisms raised by Marvin Hill in "Brodie Revisited: A Reappraisal," *Dialogue* 7 (Winter 1972): 72-87, and "Secular or Sectarian History? A Critique of 'No Man Knows My History,'" *Church History* 43 (March 1974): 78-96. My comments were made at the annual meetings of the Mormon History Association, Canandaigua, New York, May 2, 1980. See also Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, p. 248.

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